MARVEL MASTERWORKS®
THE MIGHTY THOR®
VOLUME 12

THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 206-216
GERRY CONWAY & JOHN BUSCEMA

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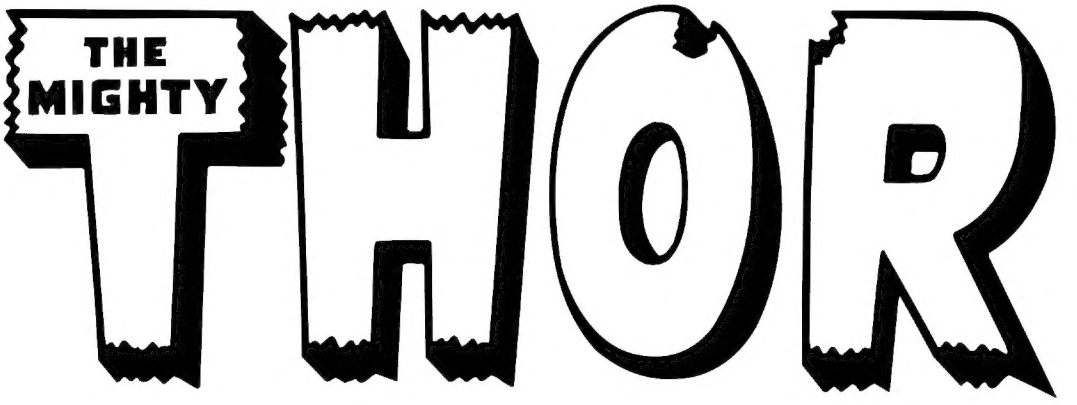
PRESENTS



VOLUME 12

COLLECTING

THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 206-216

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NOS. 206-216

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THE ANARCHIST'S COMICBOOK
BY GERRY CONWAY

Sheer anarchy.

That's a pretty fair description of the creative environment at Marvel in the early 1970s, during the company's wild expansion from a small Mom and Pop-style publisher of about a dozen titles a month, into the newsstand-dominant force it became by the late '70s.

When I started writing for Marvel in late-1969, early-1970, Stan Lee was the sole editor of a small range of comics, a quarter of which he wrote himself. His protégé and designated heir, Roy Thomas, wrote another quarter of those books, with the rest farmed out to a handful of semi-full-time freelancers, among them Gary Friedrich and, occasionally, Stan's brother, Larry Lieber. When I came on board full-time, I ended up writing another quarter of the line, which meant, in effect, three writers handled almost the entire Marvel Universe, with one editor to guide them, and one assistant editor to keep things on track.

Worked great, provided you only publish twelve or thirteen books a month. (And of those twelve or thirteen, make sure three or four of them are "minor" books like *Millie the Model*, *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos*, or *Two-Gun Kid*.)

Worked not so well, when you start expanding your monthly production to twenty books, then thirty books, then forty, fifty, sixty books, including reprints and black-and-white "adult" titles and large-format specials…

Anarchy.

When Stan became publisher in the early '70s, he turned over day-to-day editorial duties to Roy, but despite the increase in output, Roy was left as the sole active editor overseeing the entire mainline Marvel Universe. Roy had (and still has!) many skills, but the ability to oversee 40 or more separate stories a month, without any serious additional editorial support, wasn't humanly possible even for a guy as talented and, especially, as detail-oriented as he was. The result was, he came to rely on his writers to act as their own editors, which in some cases led to some brilliant and unusual work (*Man-Thing* by Steve Gerber comes to mind, as well as *Doctor Strange* by Steve Englehart, *Tomb of Dracula* by Marv Wolfman, Black Panther by Don McGregor) and some work that was, shall we say, subpar.

And then we have the book you're holding in your hands, hopefully after you've spent your hard-earned cash to purchase a copy.

(If you're reading this in one of those rare-to-find 20th century artifacts called a "book store," or a "comic book store," I urge you to spend your hard-earned cash to buy it right now and keep the owners in business.)

As I explained in a previous introduction, *The Mighty Thor* was the first "first tier" Marvel title I inherited from Stan Lee. I loved the series when Stan and Jack Kirby first started it in *Journey Into Mystery*, and I particularly enjoyed the alternative Norse mythology they created for their version of Asgard. In my view *The Mighty Thor* had one of the best supporting casts and mythological backstories in the Marvel Universe, and when I took over the writing reins, I tried to use that cast fully, and add to it a few new actors of my own (Sif's big gal pal Hildegarde, the enigmatic Silas Grant and reintroducing the exotic Tana Nile). I wanted to take advantage of *Thor*'s weird combination of mythology and science-fantasy to write worlds-spanning space operas, and the results are before you.

The way I saw it, Stan and Jack's approach to cosmic adventure in *The Mighty Thor* opened the door to a universe filled with possibilities for amazing and surreal adventures. I was happy to plunge through that door.

Which brings us to Rutland, Vermont.

Wait, what?

Okay, back to the opening sentence of this introduction:

Anarchy.

This is what happens when you hand a bunch of very creative, counter-culturally aware young people a toolbox full of possibilities, and leave them to play without any serious adult supervision:

They do things that kinda break the rules.

A little bit of backstory, to set the stage, regarding the competitive atmosphere between Marvel and DC Comics throughout the 1960s and '70s:

At the highest levels of management, it was a fiercely antagonistic, very, very hot Cold War. If you freelanced for DC as an artist or writer, you couldn't freelance for Marvel or you'd risk losing your work from DC. (This is why many Marvel artists used pseudonyms for their earliest work: Gene Colan was Adam Austin, Jack Abel was Gary Michaels, Frank Giacoia was Frankie Ray, etc.) The hostility was very real and potentially very threatening for people who had to make a living juggling work for both companies. It was a very tense, very strange atmosphere.

Well, it was for people over the age of, say, thirty.

I was eighteen. My friends in the business were all in their very early twenties. We were children of the counter-culture; we defied authority; we were Rebels, man.

Mostly we just wanted to have fun. And maybe poke some grown-ups in the eye while we were doing it.

So, Rutland, Vermont.

In the late 1960s a very nice man named Tom Fagan somehow talked the more sober-minded citizens of a small town in Vermont (the previously mentioned Rutland) to host a Halloween parade that would feature, among other characters, some locals dressed up as super heroes. (Anthropologists note, this is an early example of cosplay.) He wrote about this to Roy Thomas, who thought it would be fun to feature the parade, first on a letters page, and later, as the backdrop for a story (*Avengers* #83 and later *Marvel Feature* #2). If it had stopped there, it would have been a minor, fun, smile-worthy tip of the hat to a fan-based function.

It did not stop there.

For reasons that no one can explain now, the young professionals working in comics decided to make a pilgrimage to the Rutland Halloween Parade. I believe large quantities of beer were consumed. There may have been illegal pharmaceuticals involved. Men and women partied in personal ways. Dangerous expeditions were undertaken across woodland dams and someone might have fallen into a reservoir. Details remain elusive. Memories are cloudy.

We had a hella fun time.

And being writers and artists, we decided to immortalize our fun time in print.

The first of the Rutland stories (after Roy's) that directly referenced those of us who'd made idiots of ourselves over Halloween appeared in a *Batman* #237 story scripted by Denny O'Neil and drawn by Neal Adams. Other stories followed. And ultimately, three of us who were there had an idea that could only be executed in an environment ruled (ha) by anarchy:

We decided to do an unofficial inter-company crossover story and not tell our bosses that's what we were doing. Our story would "start" in one comic at one company, "continue" in another comic at a second company, and "conclude" in a third comic at the first company. (I use quotes because the connection between the stories involved is really more thematic than structural.) We who were writing (and in one case, coloring) the stories would appear in them as characters.

And we'd keep it secret from our editors until the books were published.

Try to imagine doing this today.

The guilty parties: Steve Englehart (my good friend and former roommate) wrote his version for The Beast, appearing in *Amazing Adventures* #16 for Marvel; Len Wein (my good friend and former roommate) wrote his version of the tale in *Justice League of America* #103, for DC Comics; I wrote my version for *The Mighty Thor* #207, contained herein; and Glynnis Oliver Wein (Len's wife and our friend) colored *Amazing Adventures* and *The Mighty Thor*.

The result was an Anarchist's Comicbook.

It was kinda a mess, it's full of in-jokes that only make sense If You Were There, and it was a lot of fun for all involved.

Needless to say, when our bosses found out they'd been party to an inter-company conspiracy to do something silly, they were not pleased.

But they didn't fire us.

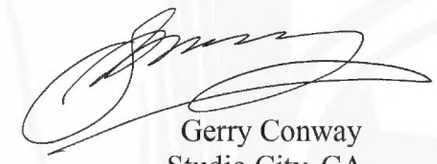
And in a way, that's more important than the quality of the stories or the fun we had doing them (or, hopefully, the fun you have reading them)—we'd challenged the status quo, and in the process, we helped (a little) change the way the two publishers treated the idea of freelancers moving between companies. It also set the stage, in a distant way, for a much more overt inter-company collaboration just a few years later.

Ultimately, though, it was just a bunch of kids doing what kids do: tweaking the noses of authority figures and having a blast.

So, now you know.

Read, enjoy, and go find your own set of noses to tweak.

And if you get the chance, visit Rutland, Vermont. It really is a lovely, lovely town.



Gerry Conway
Studio City, CA
May, 2013

THOR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
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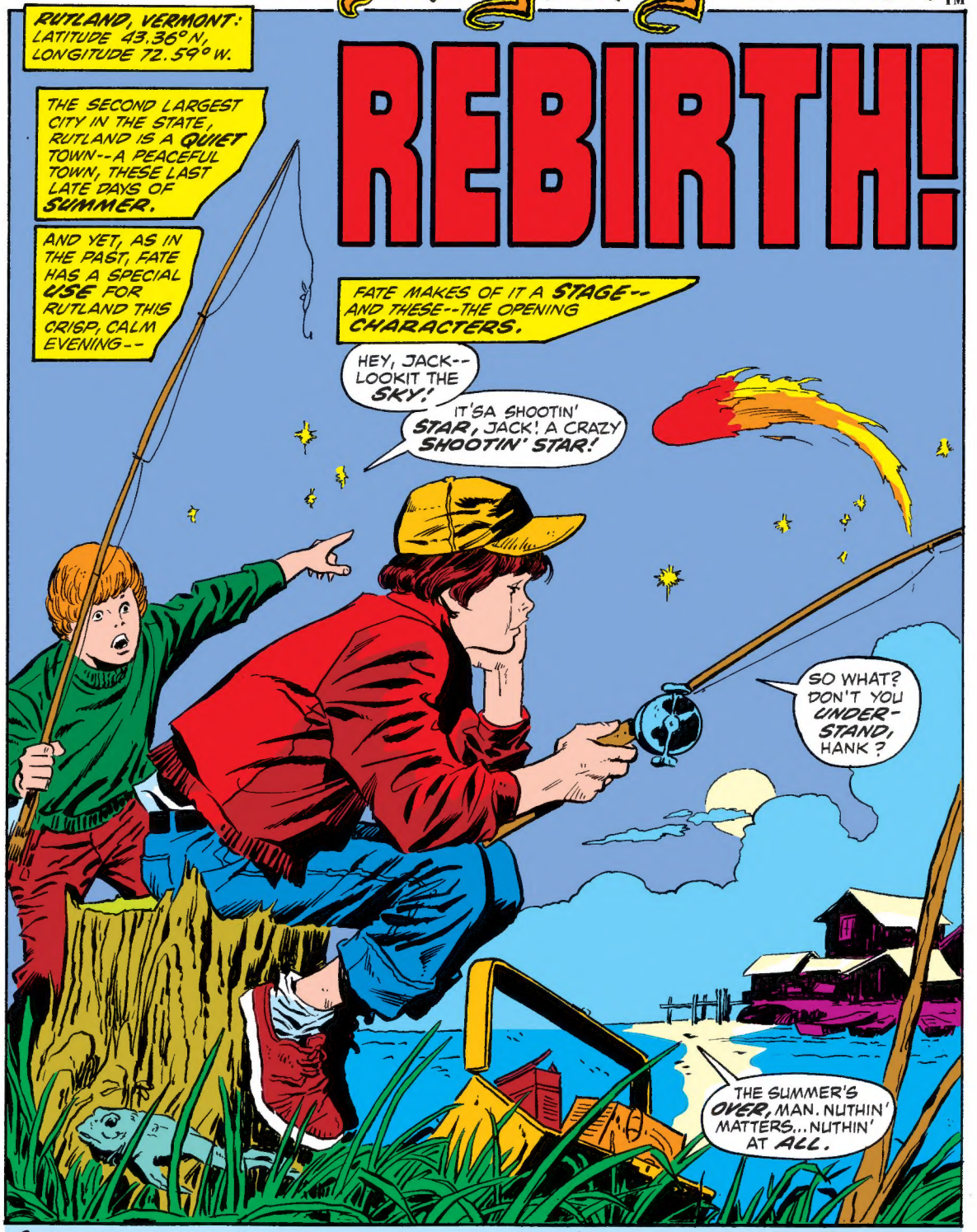
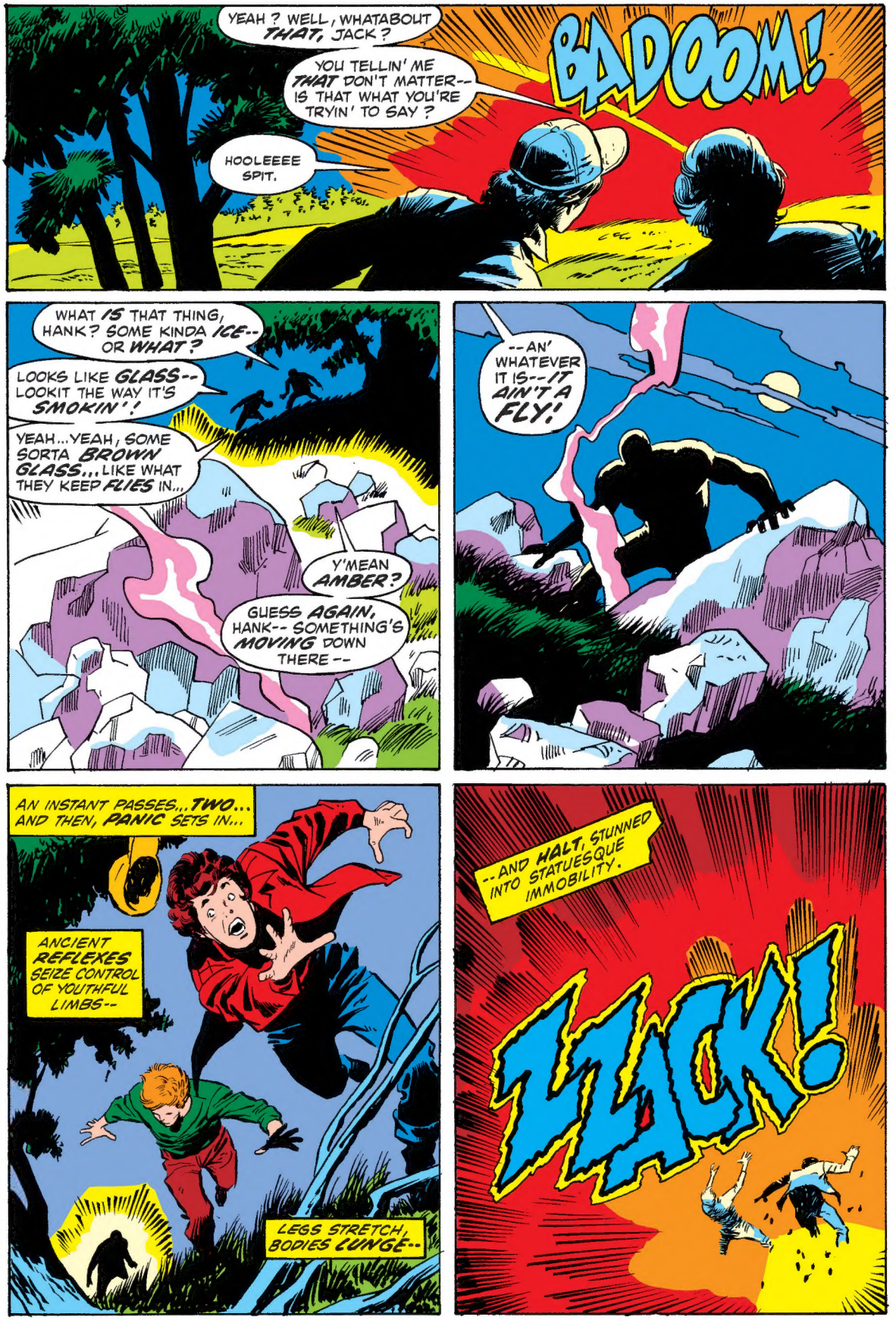
THE MIGHTY
THOR
THE HAMMER OF THOR HAS SUPERNATURAL POWER! BUT, ALAS, SO DOES THE SAVAGE BALL AND CHAIN OF THE ABSORBING MAN!
YOUR OWN STRENGTH WILL DESTROY YOU, THUNDER GOD!
FOR MINE IS THE POWER TO ABSORB YOUR MIGHT-- AND TO TURN IT AGAINST YOU!
THE POWER OF THE ABSORBING MAN!

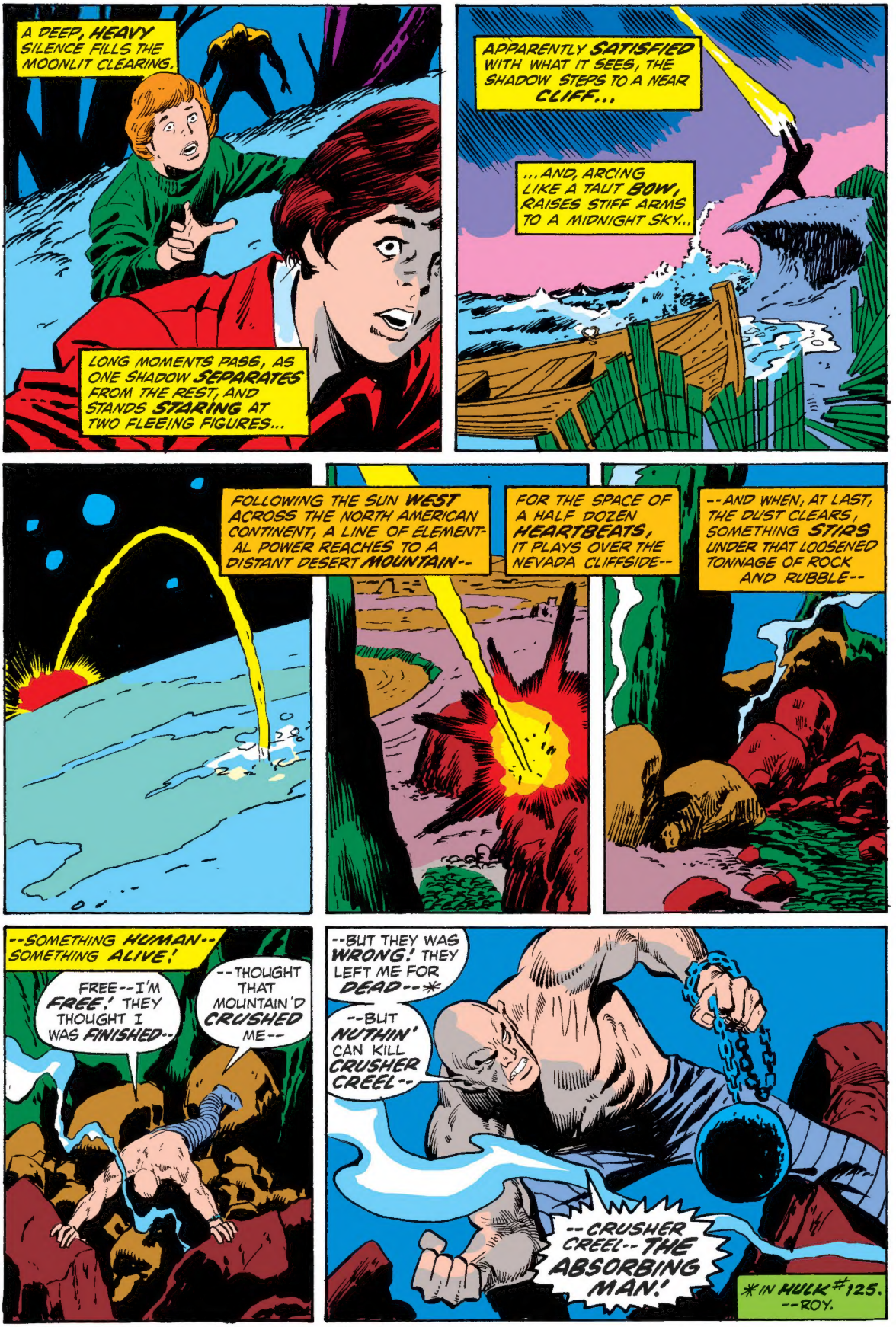
Stan Lee presents: The Mighty Thor™

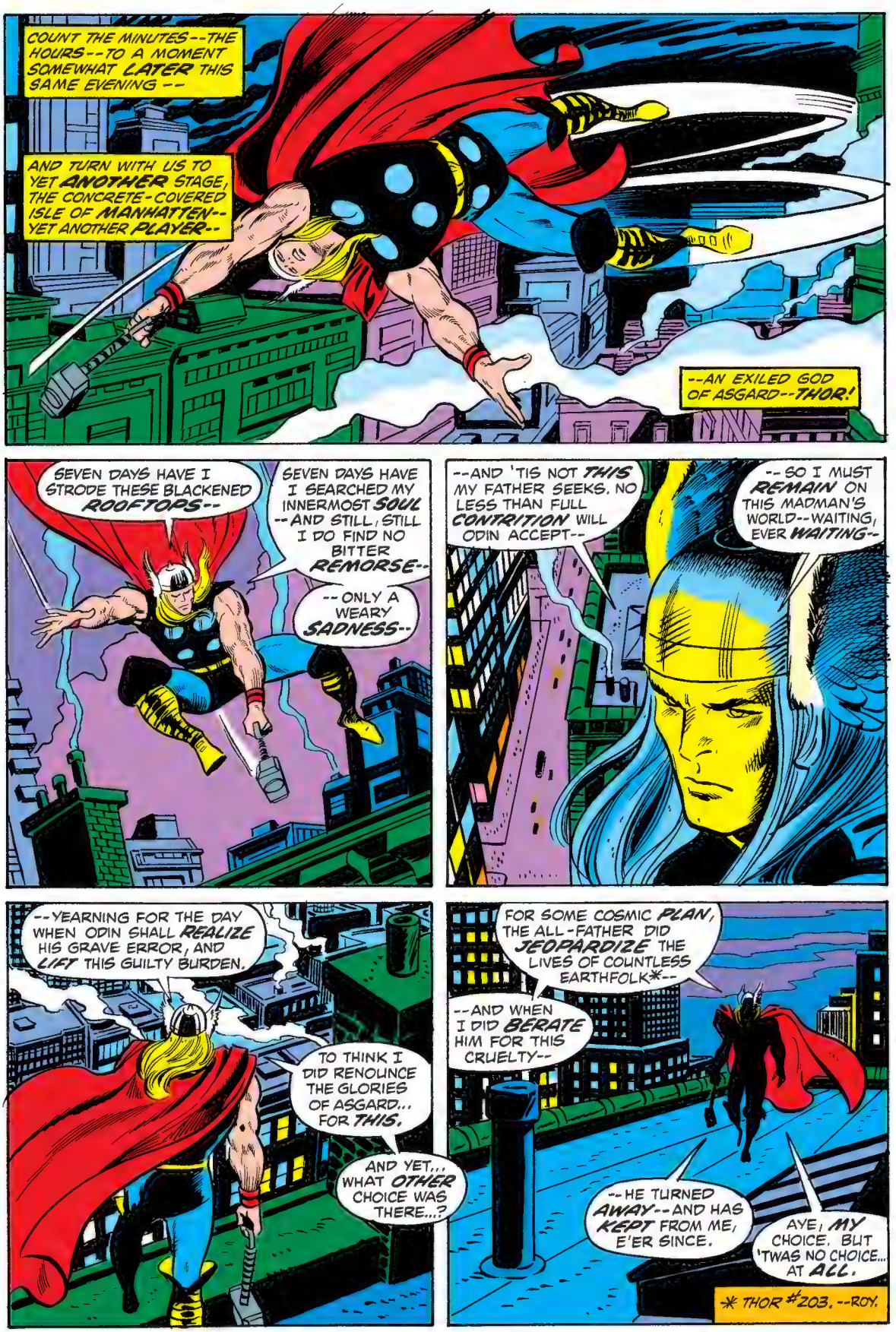
REBIRTH!

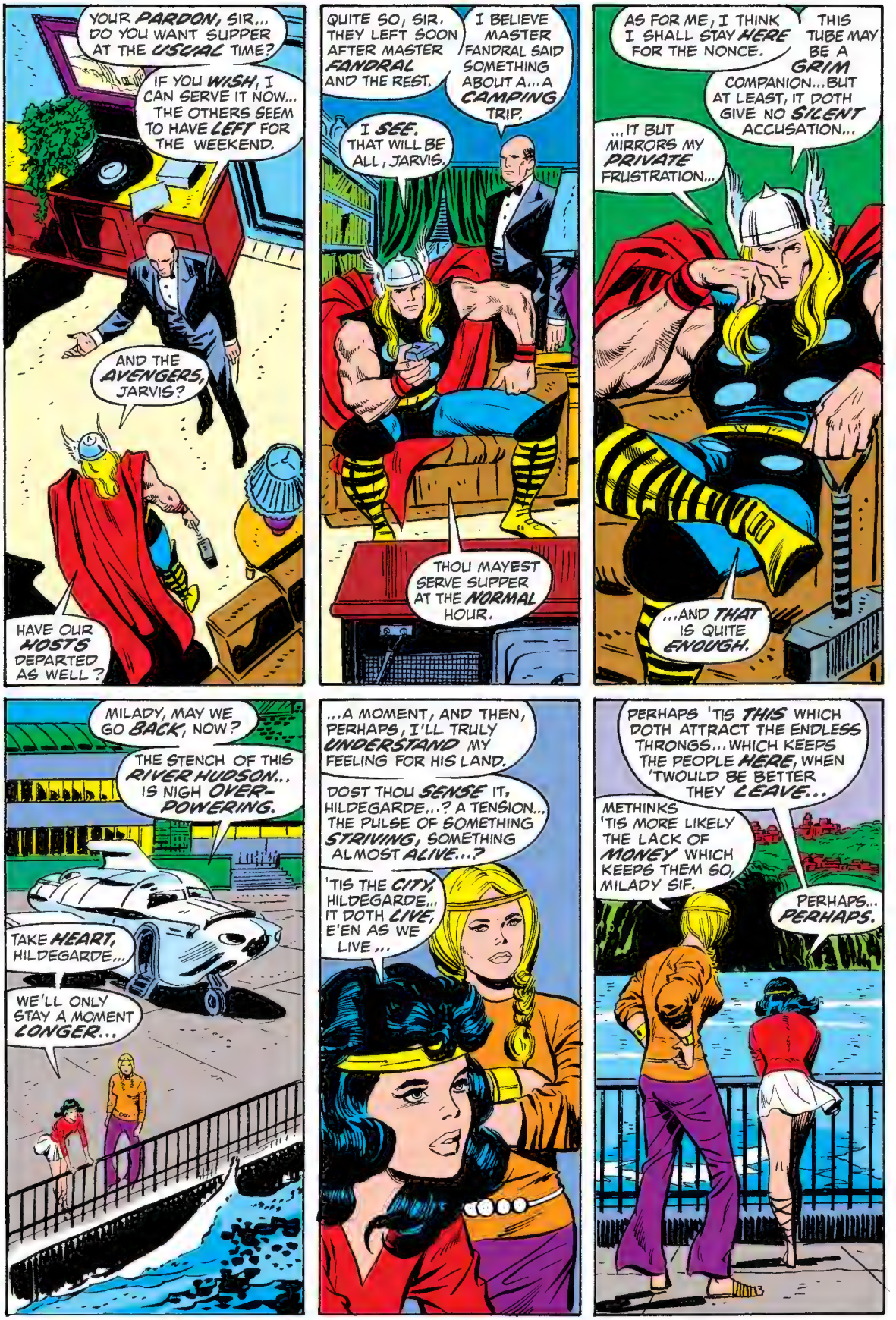

RUTLAND, VERMONT: LATITUDE 43.36° N, LONGITUDE 72.59° W.
THE SECOND LARGEST CITY IN THE STATE, RUTLAND IS A QUIET TOWN--A PEACEFUL TOWN, THESE LAST LATE DAYS OF SUMMER.
AND YET, AS IN THE PAST, FATE HAS A SPECIAL USE FOR RUTLAND THIS CRISP, CALM EVENING--
FATE MAKES OF IT A STAGE-- AND THESE--THE OPENING CHARACTERS.
HEY, JACK-- LOOKIT THE SKY!
IT'SA SHOOTIN' STAR, JACK! A CRAZY SHOOTIN' STAR!
SO WHAT? DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND, HANK?
THE SUMMER'S OVER, MAN. NUTHIN' MATTERS...NUTHIN' AT ALL.

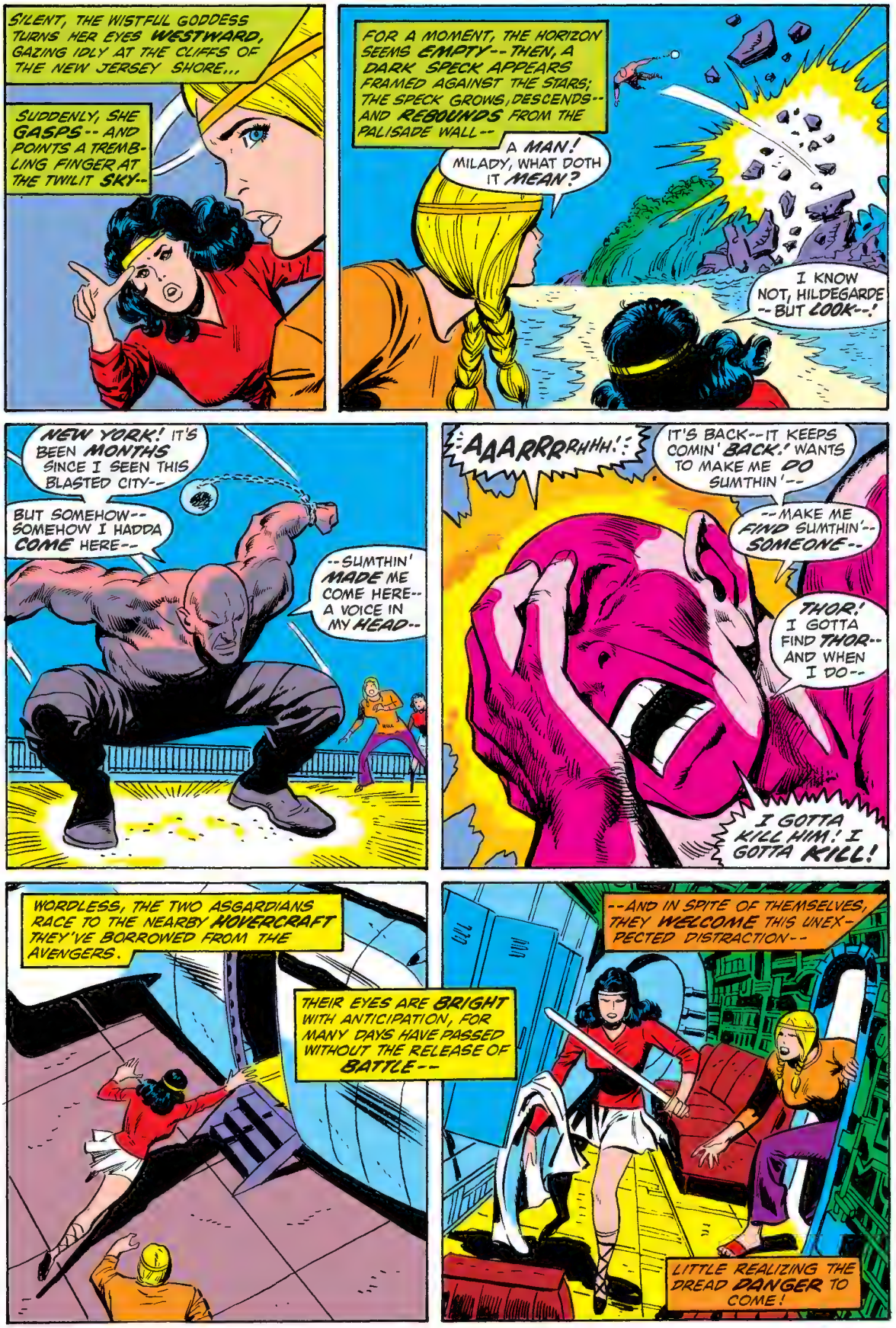
GERRY CONWAY, SCRIPTER * JOHN BUSCEMA, ARTIST * V. COLLETTA, inker * J. COSTANZA, letterer * ROY THOMAS, EDITOR


YEAH ? WELL, WHATABOUT THAT, JACK ?
YOU TELLIN' ME THAT DON'T MATTER-- IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TRYIN' TO SAY ?
HOOLEEEE SPIT.
BADOOM!
WHAT IS THAT THING, HANK? SOME KINDA ICE-- OR WHAT ?
LOOKS LIKE GLASS-- LOOKIT THE WAY IT'S SMOKIN'!
YEAH...YEAH, SOME SORTA BROWN GLASS...LIKE WHAT THEY KEEP FLIES IN...
Y'MEAN AMBER?
GUESS AGAIN, HANK-- SOMETHING'S MOVING DOWN THERE --
--AN' WHATEVER IT IS--IT AIN'T A FLY!
AN INSTANT PASSES...TWO... AND THEN, PANIC SETS IN...
ANCIENT REFLEXES SEIZE CONTROL OF YOUTHFUL LIMBS--
LEGS STRETCH, BODIES LUNGE--
--AND HALT, STUNNED INTO STATUESQUE IMMOBILITY.
ZZZCK!

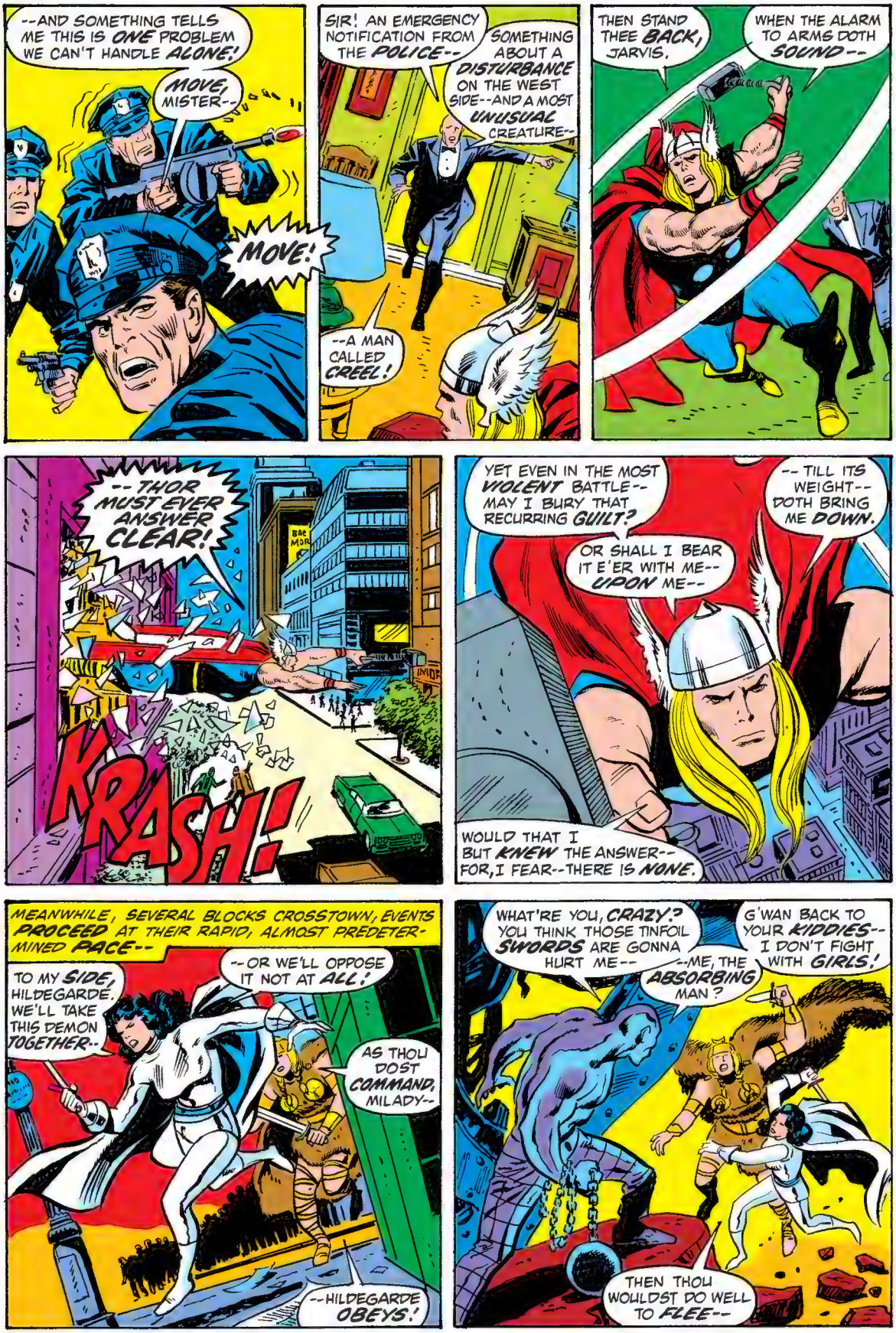

A DEEP, HEAVY SILENCE FILLS THE MOONLIT CLEARING.
LONG MOMENTS PASS, AS ONE SHADOW SEPARATES FROM THE REST, AND STANDS STARING AT TWO FLEEING FIGURES...
APPARENTLY SATISFIED WITH WHAT IT SEES, THE SHADOW STEPS TO A NEAR CLIFF...
...AND, ARCING LIKE A TAUT BOW, RAISES STIFF ARMS TO A MIDNIGHT SKY...
FOLLOWING THE SUN WEST ACROSS THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT, A LINE OF ELEMENTAL POWER REACHES TO A DISTANT DESERT MOUNTAIN--
FOR THE SPACE OF A HALF DOZEN HEARTBEATS, IT PLAYS OVER THE NEVADA CLIFFSIDE--
--AND WHEN, AT LAST, THE DUST CLEARS, SOMETHING STIRS UNDER THAT LOOSENED TONNAGE OF ROCK AND RUBBLE--
--SOMETHING HUMAN-- SOMETHING ALIVE!
FREE--I'M FREE! THEY THOUGHT I WAS FINISHED--
--THOUGHT THAT MOUNTAIN'D CRUSHED ME--
--BUT THEY WAS WRONG! THEY LEFT ME FOR DEAD--*
--BUT NUTHIN' CAN KILL CRUSHER CREEL--
--CRUSHER CREEL-- THE ABSORBING MAN!
*IN HULK #125. --ROY.


COUNT THE MINUTES--THE HOURS--TO A MOMENT SOMEWHAT LATER THIS SAME EVENING --
AND TURN WITH US TO YET ANOTHER STAGE, THE CONCRETE-COVERED ISLE OF MANHATTEN--YET ANOTHER PLAYER--
--AN EXILED GOD OF ASGARD--THOR!
SEVEN DAYS HAVE I STRODE THESE BLACKENED ROOFTOPS--
SEVEN DAYS HAVE I SEARCHED MY INNERMOST SOUL --AND STILL, STILL I DO FIND NO BITTER REMORSE--
--ONLY A WEARY SADNESS--
--AND 'TIS NOT THIS MY FATHER SEEKS. NO LESS THAN FULL CONTRITION WILL ODIN ACCEPT--
--SO I MUST REMAIN ON THIS MADMAN'S WORLD--WAITING, EVER WAITING--
--YEARNING FOR THE DAY WHEN ODIN SHALL REALIZE HIS GRAVE ERROR, AND LIFT THIS GUILTY BURDEN.
TO THINK I DID RENOUNCE THE GLORIES OF ASGARD... FOR THIS.
AND YET,,, WHAT OTHER CHOICE WAS THERE...?
FOR SOME COSMIC PLAN, THE ALL-FATHER DID JEOPARDIZE THE LIVES OF COUNTLESS EARTHFOLK*--
--AND WHEN I DID BERATE HIM FOR THIS CRUELTY--
--HE TURNED AWAY--AND HAS KEPT FROM ME, E'ER SINCE.
AYE, MY CHOICE. BUT 'TWAS NO CHOICE... AT ALL.
* THOR #203. --ROY.


YOUR PARDON, SIR... DO YOU WANT SUPPER AT THE USUAL TIME?
IF YOU WISH, I CAN SERVE IT NOW... THE OTHERS SEEM TO HAVE LEFT FOR THE WEEKEND.
AND THE AVENGERS, JARVIS?
HAVE OUR HOSTS DEPARTED AS WELL?
QUITE SO, SIR. THEY LEFT SOON AFTER MASTER FANDRAL AND THE REST.
I BELIEVE MASTER FANDRAL SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A... A CAMPING TRIP.
I SEE. THAT WILL BE ALL, JARVIS.
THOU MAYEST SERVE SUPPER AT THE NORMAL HOUR.
AS FOR ME, I THINK I SHALL STAY HERE FOR THE NONCE.
THIS TUBE MAY BE A GRIM COMPANION... BUT AT LEAST, IT DOTH GIVE NO SILENT ACCUSATION...
...IT BUT MIRRORS MY PRIVATE FRUSTRATION...
...AND THAT IS QUITE ENOUGH.
MILADY, MAY WE GO BACK, NOW?
THE STENCH OF THIS RIVER HUDSON... IS NIGH OVER-POWERING.
TAKE HEART, HILDEGARDE...
WE'LL ONLY STAY A MOMENT LONGER...
...A MOMENT, AND THEN, PERHAPS, I'LL TRULY UNDERSTAND MY FEELING FOR HIS LAND.
DOST THOU SENSE IT, HILDEGARDE...? A TENSION... THE PULSE OF SOMETHING STRIVING, SOMETHING ALMOST ALIVE...?
'TIS THE CITY, HILDEGARDE... IT DOTH LIVE, E'EN AS WE LIVE...
PERHAPS 'TIS THIS WHICH DOTH ATTRACT THE ENDLESS THRONGS... WHICH KEEPS THE PEOPLE HERE, WHEN 'TWOULD BE BETTER THEY LEAVE...
METHINKS 'TIS MORE LIKELY THE LACK OF MONEY WHICH KEEPS THEM SO, MILADY SIF.
PERHAPS... PERHAPS.


SILENT, THE WISTFUL GODDESS TURNS HER EYES WESTWARD, GAZING IDLY AT THE CLIFFS OF THE NEW JERSEY SHORE...
SUDDENLY, SHE GASPS-- AND POINTS A TREMBLING FINGER AT THE TWILIT SKY--
FOR A MOMENT, THE HORIZON SEEMS EMPTY--THEN, A DARK SPECK APPEARS FRAMED AGAINST THE STARS; THE SPECK GROWS, DESCENDS-- AND REBOUNDS FROM THE PALISADE WALL--
A MAN! MILADY, WHAT DOTH IT MEAN?
I KNOW NOT, HILDEGARDE --BUT LOOK--!
NEW YORK! IT'S BEEN MONTHS SINCE I SEEN THIS BLASTED CITY--
BUT SOMEHOW-- SOMEHOW I HADDA COME HERE--
--SUMTHIN' MADE ME COME HERE-- A VOICE IN MY HEAD--
AAARRRRHHH!
IT'S BACK--IT KEEPS COMIN' BACK! WANTS TO MAKE ME DO SUMTHIN'--
--MAKE ME FIND SUMTHIN'-- SOMEONE--
THOR! I GOTTA FIND THOR-- AND WHEN I DO--
I GOTTA KILL HIM! I GOTTA KILL!
WORDLESS, THE TWO ASGARDIANS RACE TO THE NEARBY HOVERCRAFT THEY'VE BORROWED FROM THE AVENGERS.
THEIR EYES ARE BRIGHT WITH ANTICIPATION, FOR MANY DAYS HAVE PASSED WITHOUT THE RELEASE OF BATTLE--
--AND IN SPITE OF THEMSELVES, THEY WELCOME THIS UNEXPECTED DISTRACTION--
LITTLE REALIZING THE DREAD DANGER TO COME!

FOR, AS THEY GIRD THEMSELVES FOR THE COMING ENCOUNTER, MAD CHAOS ERUPTS A SCANT HUNDRED YARDS AWAY--
BADOOM!
--CHAOS IN THE FRENZIED FORM OF A PAIN-WRACKED CRUSHER CREEL!
CHEST HEAVING, HE STANDS GLARING IN THE MOONLIGHT--HIS BODY GLISTENING WITH THE SHEEN OF MOLTEN METAL--
ALREADY, THE PROCESS HAS BEGUN--THE UNCANNY POWER WHICH HAS MADE HIM, IN TRUTH--
--THE ABSORBING MAN!
WHY DON'T IT STOP? WHY'S IT KEEP HURTIN'?
I GOTTA STOP THE PAIN--I GOTTA!
THOR! CRUSHER CREEL'S LOOKIN' FOR YA, THUNDER GOD--HE'S GONNA TEAR THIS CRUMMY TOWN TO PIECES, YA HEAR ME?
I'M GONNA WRECK THIS PLACE TILL I FIND YA--
I'M GONNA WRECK IT ALL!
CAP'N, THERE ISN'T ANYTHING WE CAN DO!
HE KEEPS YELLIN' FOR THOR--
THEN DON'T JUST STAND THERE, MAN--
CALL AVENGERS HQ--LET THEM KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE--
--BECAUSE, IF THE THUNDER GOD DOESN'T SHOW UP SOON--
--WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM--
BATANG!


--AND SOMETHING TELLS ME THIS IS ONE PROBLEM WE CAN'T HANDLE ALONE!
MOVE, MISTER--
MOVE!
SIR! AN EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION FROM THE POLICE--
SOMETHING ABOUT A DISTURBANCE ON THE WEST SIDE--AND A MOST UNUSUAL CREATURE--
--A MAN CALLED CREEL!
THEN STAND THEE BACK, JARVIS.
WHEN THE ALARM TO ARMS DOTH SOUND--
--THOR MUST EVER ANSWER CLEAR!
KRASH!
YET EVEN IN THE MOST VIOLENT BATTLE-- MAY I BURY THAT RECURRING GUILT?
OR SHALL I BEAR IT E'ER WITH ME-- UPON ME--
-- TILL ITS WEIGHT-- DOTH BRING ME DOWN.
WOULD THAT I BUT KNEW THE ANSWER-- FOR, I FEAR--THERE IS NONE.
MEANWHILE, SEVERAL BLOCKS CROSSTOWN, EVENTS PROCEED AT THEIR RAPID, ALMOST PREDETERMINED PACE--
TO MY SIDE, HILDEGARDE. WE'LL TAKE THIS DEMON TOGETHER--
--OR WE'LL OPPOSE IT NOT AT ALL!
AS THOU DOST COMMAND, MILADY--
--HILDEGARDE OBEYS!
WHAT'RE YOU, CRAZY? YOU THINK THOSE TINFOIL SWORDS ARE GONNA HURT ME--
--ME, THE ABSORBING MAN?
G'WAN BACK TO YOUR KIDDIES-- I DON'T FIGHT WITH GIRLS!
THEN THOU WOULDST DO WELL TO FLEE--

--FOR THESE "GIRLS" WOULD FIGHT WITH THEE!
YOU'RE NUTS, LADY--THERE AIN'T NOBODY ALIVE WHO CAN STOP ME!
SWAK!
THE COPS FOUND THAT OUT--AN' MUCH AS IT GOES AGAINST MY GENERAL PRINCIPLES--
--NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!
PERHAPS 'TIS THOU WHO WILL DO THE LEARNING, MY FRIEND--
--FOR, INDEED, THERE IS MUCH OF WHICH THOU ART BASELY IGNORANT!
MAN IS NOT ALONE IN STRENGTH--
NAY, OTHERS ALSO MAY POSSESS IT--
--MAY TRAIN IT, DISCOVER ITS LIMITS AND SKILLS--AND ULTIMATELY--
--USE IT, AS WELL!
CLANG!

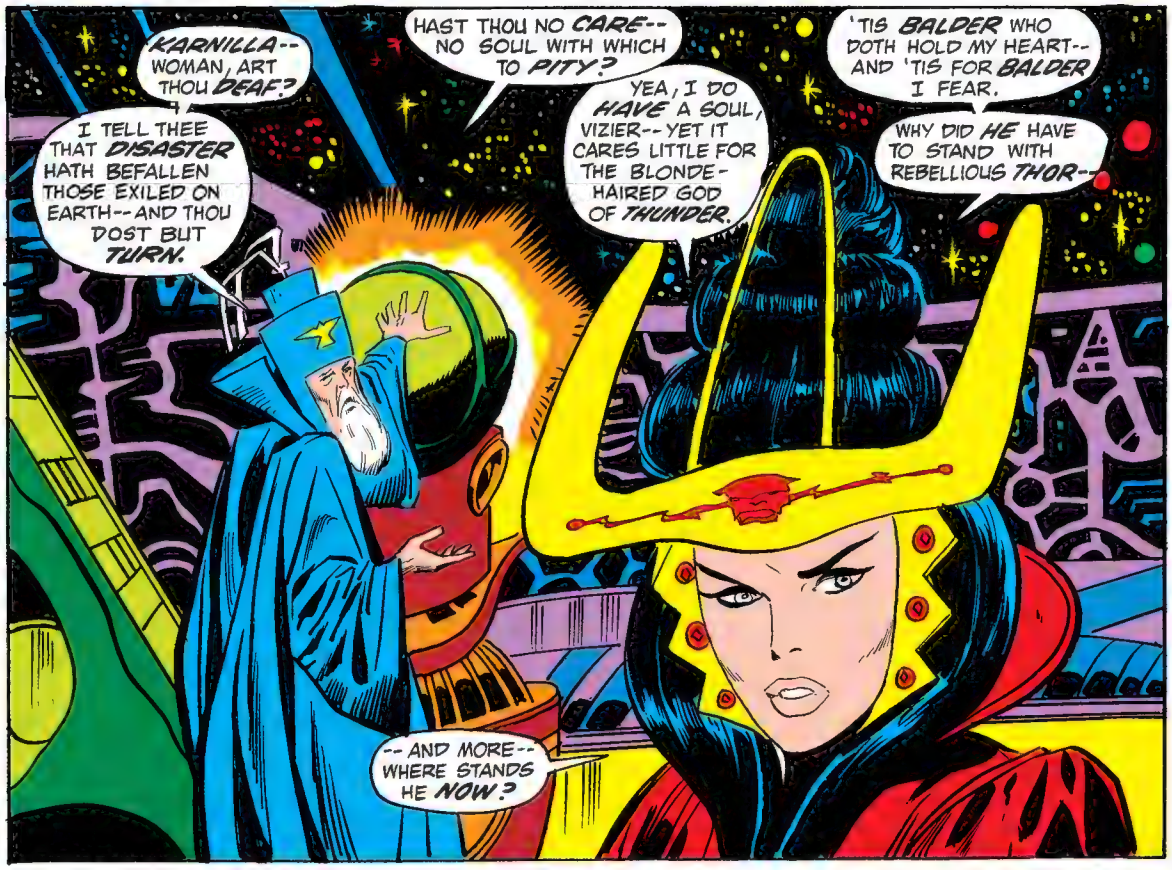
YA DID THAT REAL WELL, BLONDIE, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU PROVED?
NOTHIN'!
I ABSORBED THE POWER OF THAT BLOW-- JUST LIKE I ABSORBED THE STRENGTH OF THAT GIRDER--
--AN' NOW, LITTLE LADIES-- I'M GONNA SHOW YOU JUST WHAT THAT POWER CAN DO!
IT AIN'T GONNA BE PRETTY--BUT I PROMISE YA--
--IT'LL BE QUICK!
KHOOM!
DIVIDE AN INSTANT INTO ITS COMPONENT PARTS:
ACTION; REACTION; AND ONE MORE--
--OBSERVATION.
AND OF ALL THE PARTS, THIS LAST IS MOST PASSIVE--AND MOST FRUSTRATING--
--THERE IS NO INVOLVEMENT-- ONLY HELPLESS PERCEPTION--
--AND AN AGONIZING AWARENESS OF ONE'S UTTER UNIMPORTANCE IN THE EYES OF BLIND DESTINY!

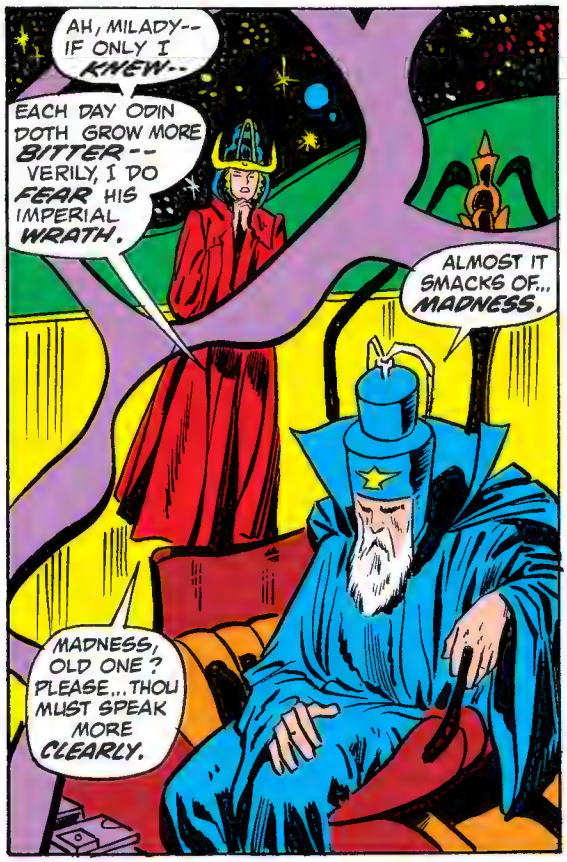
OF SUCH FRUSTRATION IS GRIM DETERMINATION FORGED--
AND IT IS THIS DETERMINATION WHICH LIFTS THE THUNDER GOD'S BOWED HEAD, WHICH LIGHTS HIS FACE WITH AN EXPRESSION OF THE BLACKEST HATE--AND HIS SOUL WITH A REMORSELESS FIRE.
BUT WE'VE GONE TOO LONG WITHOUT THE BEGINNINGS OF AN EXPLANATION--AND THOUGH THE FINAL REVELATION IS NOT YET FORTHCOMING, PERHAPS A MOMENTARY EXCURSION TO THE MOONLIT HILLS OF VERMONT MIGHT PROVIDE THE WATCHFUL READER WITH A TELLING CLUE
ON A DESERTED SIDEROAD NEAR THE DIMLY-LIGHTED HOME OF A MAN CALLED TOM FAGAN*, A LONELY FIGURE BEATS A WEARY PATH, ONLY ONCE CALLING OUT--
* TOM'S FIRST APPEARANCE WAS IN AVENGERS #83. --RASCALLY ROY.
--AND RECEIVING HARSH WELCOME IN RETURN!
RRRRRRRR
RRRROW
RRRRR
BACK--I SAY THEE, STAY BACK.
THOU WILT NEED FIND OTHER MEAT--
POOR AS IT IS, MY SKIN IS MINE ALONE.
WHINE!
RRRRR!
SATAN! DIABLO! GET AWAY FROM THERE!
FIRST VISITOR IN THREE MONTHS, AND YOU TRY TO DRIVE HIM AWAY--
CRAZY ANIMALS--DON'T KNOW WHY I KEEP 'EM.
WELL. ANYTHING WE CAN DO FOR YOU, MISTER?

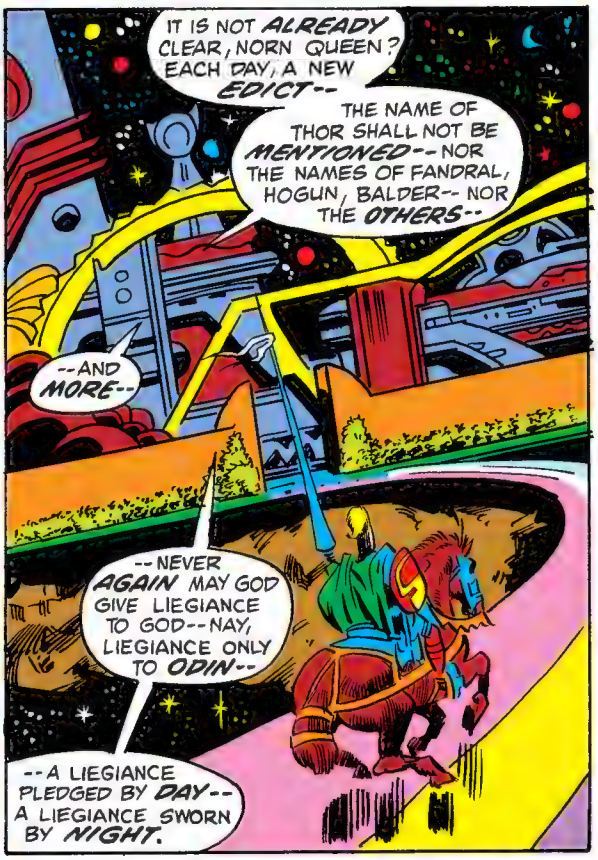
I-I WAS HOPING THOU WOULDST HELP ME, KINDLY SIR.
I SEEM-- TO HAVE LOST MY WAY.
WELL NOW, THAT SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT-- RUTLAND'S NOT EXACTLY OFF THE BEATEN TRAIL, YOU KNOW.
FACT IS, SOME FOLKS'LL BE DROPPING BY IN A FEW DAYS FOR A LITTLE PARTY--
--AND FROM THE COOKS OF IT, MY FRIEND, YOU COULD USE SOME OF THE FOOD WE'VE LAID IN!
MY THANKS, GOOD STRANGER.
I ASSURE THEE-- THOU WILT BE REWARDED MOST-- HANDSOMELY.
ONLY A CLUE, AND NOTHING MORE.
TO GAIN FURTHER INSIGHT, LET US RETURN TO THE STREETS OF NEW YORK--
WHAM!
--AND A BATTLE ALREADY IN PROGRESS!
LITTLE MAN, I'M GONNA CRUSH YOU!
MAYBE THAT'LL MAKE THE PAIN GO AWAY-- AND RIGHT NOW, THAT'S ALL I WANT--
-- JUST TO MAKE THE PAIN GO AWAY!
WHOK!
THEN THOU HAST MADE A MISTAKE MOST DEAR--
--FOR THY PAIN-- HATH ONLY BEGUN!

THERE AIN'T A SINGLE THING YOU CAN DO TO ME, THUNDER GOD!
ONCE YOU TOUCH ME, YOUR POWER'S MINE--
I'LL ALWAYS BE ONE STEP AHEAD OF YOU-- ALWAYS!
METHINKS THOU DOTH ASSUME TOO MUCH, CRUSHER CREEL.
THOU DOTH THINK I BE A FOOL-- TO EXPEND MY STRENGTH IN ONE FUTILE THRUST--
--YET THOR HATH NEVER PLAYED THE JESTER--NOR WILL HE NOW!
RATHER, I DO CONSERVE THE BULK OF MY POWER-- AND WHEN THE MOMENT DOTH COME TO STRIKE--
BKOW!
--THEN SHALL I TRULY STRIKE-- AND NOT BEFORE!
WHOMP!
MILORD THOR, STAY THY HAND-- I PRITHEE, LOOK HERE.
NAY, HILDEGARDE-- SAY NO MORE.
MILADY DOTH LIVE, GOD OF THUNDER-- THE PURPOSE OF THY ANGER HATH BEEN REMOVED!
CANNOT THOU SEE HIS EYES? PURPOSE HATH ALREADY LEFT HIM--AND NOW--
-- ONLY BATTLE REMAINS!

THE PAIN-- THE BLASTED PAIN'S STILL THERE--
POUNDIN' IN MY BRAIN-- THROBBIN' AND THROBBIN'--
I'VE HAD IT, MISTER-- I'M THROUGH PLAYING CRUDDY GAMES--
--I'M GONNA FINISH YOU REAL QUICK--
--AN' WHEN I'M DONE-- THERE WON'T BE ENOUGH 'A YOU TO WIPE UP WITH A SPONGE!
SO IF YOU GOD-TYPES GOT ANY SORTA PRAYERS YA LIKE TA SAY--
--NOW'S YER CHANCE TO SAY 'EM--
WHAM!
--'CAUSE BELIEVE ME, MISTER THUNDER GOD-- AFTER I'M DONE WITH YA--
--YOU AIN'T GONNA BE ABLE TO PRAY--
--EVER!
'TIS WORSE THAN E'ER WE FEARED, MILADY!
IN A MANNER STILL UNREVEALED, THIS CREATURE HATH ESCAPED THE FATE DESIGNED FOR HIM--
--AND DOTH NEAR OVER-POWER THE NOBLE THOR!

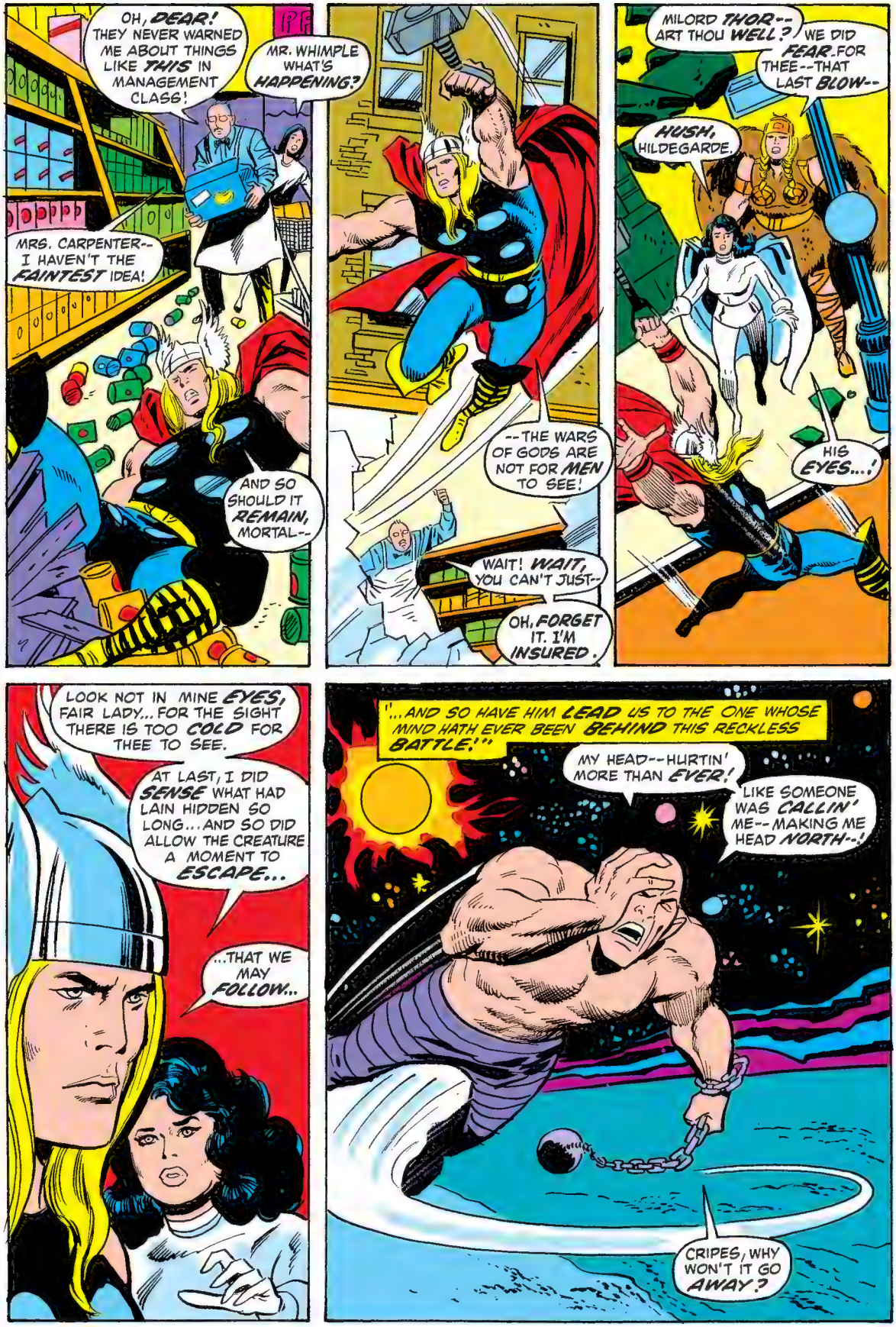

KARNILLA--WOMAN, ART THOU DEAF?
I TELL THEE THAT DISASTER HATH BEFALLEN THOSE EXILED ON EARTH--AND THOU DOST BUT TURN.
HAST THOU NO CARE--NO SOUL WITH WHICH TO PITY?
YEA, I DO HAVE A SOUL, VIZIER--YET IT CARES LITTLE FOR THE BLONDE-HAIRED GOD OF THUNDER.
'TIS BALDER WHO DOTH HOLD MY HEART--AND 'TIS FOR BALDER I FEAR.
WHY DID HE HAVE TO STAND WITH REBELLIOUS THOR--
--AND MORE--WHERE STANDS HE NOW?

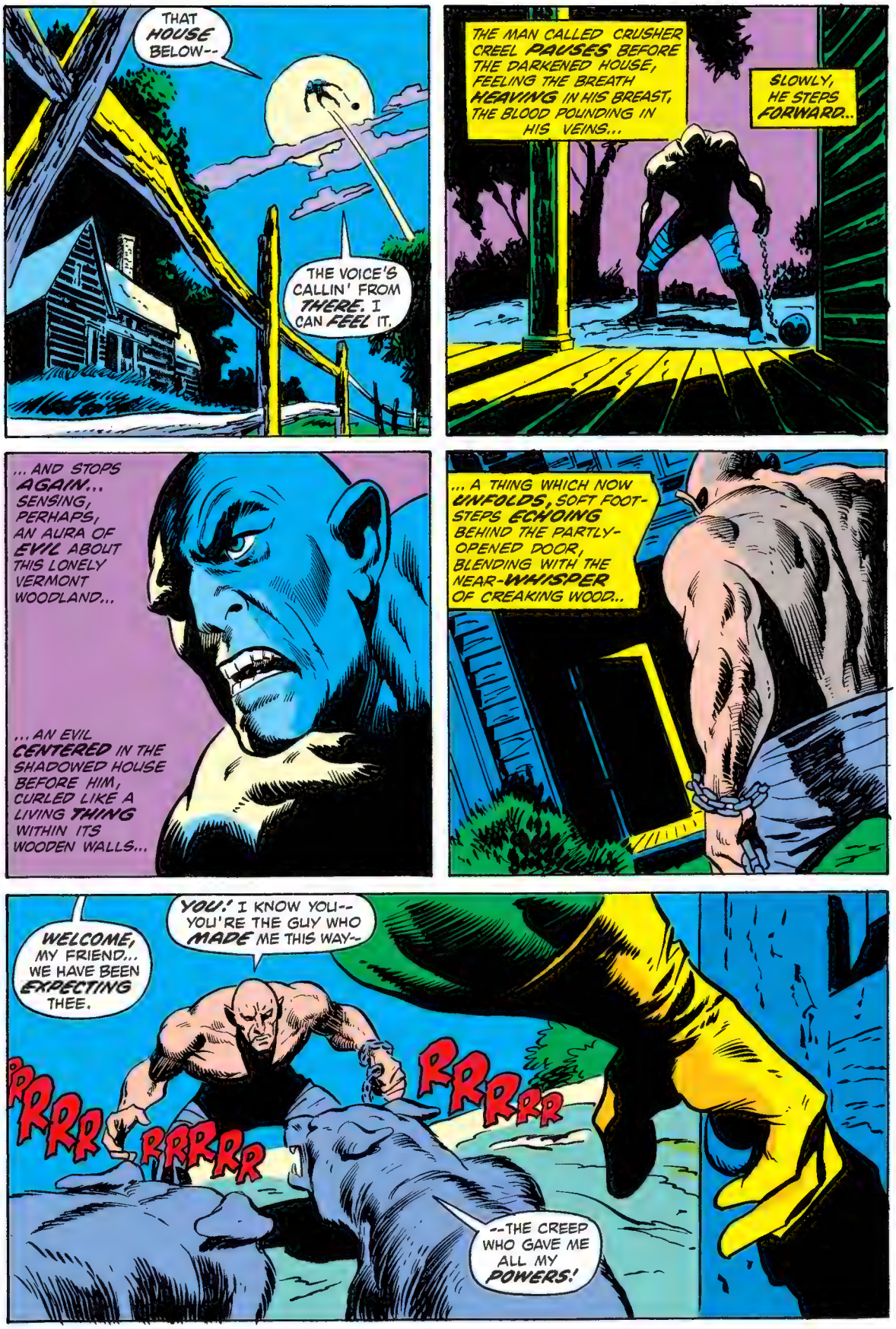

AH, MILADY--IF ONLY I KNEW--
EACH DAY ODIN DOTH GROW MORE BITTER--VERILY, I DO FEAR HIS IMPERIAL WRATH.
ALMOST IT SMACKS OF,, MADNESS.
MADNESS, OLD ONE? PLEASE,,,THOU MUST SPEAK MORE CLEARLY.


IT IS NOT ALREADY CLEAR, NORN QUEEN? EACH DAY, A NEW EDICT--
THE NAME OF THOR SHALL NOT BE MENTIONED--NOR THE NAMES OF FANDRAL, HOGUN, BALDER--NOR THE OTHERS--
--AND MORE--
--NEVER AGAIN MAY GOD GIVE LIEGIANCE TO GOD--NAY, LIEGIANCE ONLY TO ODIN--
--A LIEGIANCE PLEDGED BY DAY--A LIEGIANCE SWORN BY NIGHT.

THEN 'TIS TRUE-- THE NIGHTMARE HATH ONLY NOW BEGUN.
OH, BRAVE BALDER-- WHY DIDST THOU TURN FROM ME? WHY DIDST THOU HAVE ME UNSEAL THY PLEDGE--?
DOST THOU HATE ME SO? AM I SO EVIL-- THAT THOU MUST VISIT THIS BLACK CRUELTY 'PON ME?
"HAST THOU NO ANSWER? OR DOST THOU NOT YET SEE-- THE SWELLING LOVE I HOLD FOR THEE-- ONLY FOR THEE?"
HE SEEMS YET GRIM, FANDRAL.
PERHAPS THY PLANS HAVE FAILED.
WE SHALL SEE, HOGUN.
BALDER, ART THOU SURE THOU WILT HAVE NO FOOD?
'TIS A FINE FLOUNDER WE'VE LANDED-- A PITY TO WASTE ON FAT VOLSTAGG ALONE.
I'VE NO STOMACH FOR FOOD, FANDRAL. MY APOLOGIES.
TO HELA WITH THINE APOLOGIES!
THOU ART ACTING LIKE A MAN DEAD-- THINKEST THOU WE CANNOT CARE?
I KNOW, FANDRAL...
...BUT I CANNOT CHANGE MY HEART.
'TIS A FINE THING, THIS EMOTION LOVE.
IT BEGS NO LEAVE... IT DOTH COME AS IT PLEASE...
...AND NEITHER GOD NOR MAN MAY TURN IT ASIDE.
ELSEWHERE ON THE PLANET EARTH, EVENTS BUILD TO A WORLD-SHATTERING CLIMAX--
--A CLIMAX BEGUN WITH A CRY OF RAGE--
--AND THE FLINGING OF A MYSTIC HAMMER!

SPTANG!
YOU DON'T LEARN VERY FAST, DO YA, THUNDER GOD--?
MAYBE YOU STILL DON'T GET THE PICTURE. ANYTHING ME OR MY BALL AN' CHAIN TOUCH, WE ABSORB ITS POWER--
--INCLUDING THE POWERS OF THAT CRAZY MALLET OF YOURS!
SO COME 'N GET IT, PRETTY BOY--
--'CAUSE BELIEVE ME, THIS IS SUMTHIN' I'VE BEEN WAITIN' TO DO FOR A LONNNNG TIME--
WHITTTT!
--A REAL LONG TIME!
WHAT'SA MATTER WITH YOU, BLONDIE?
SOMEBODY CATCH YOUR TONGUE?
KRASH!


OH, DEAR! THEY NEVER WARNED ME ABOUT THINGS LIKE THIS IN MANAGEMENT CLASS!
MR. WHIMPLE WHAT'S HAPPENING?
MRS. CARPENTER-- I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA!
AND SO SHOULD IT REMAIN, MORTAL--
--THE WARS OF GODS ARE NOT FOR MEN TO SEE!
WAIT! WAIT, YOU CAN'T JUST--
OH, FORGET IT. I'M INSURED.
MILORD THOR-- ART THOU WELL?
WE DID FEAR FOR THEE--THAT LAST BLOW--
HUSH, HILDEGARDE.
HIS EYES...!
LOOK NOT IN MINE EYES, FAIR LADY... FOR THE SIGHT THERE IS TOO COLD FOR THEE TO SEE.
AT LAST, I DID SENSE WHAT HAD LAIN HIDDEN SO LONG... AND SO DID ALLOW THE CREATURE A MOMENT TO ESCAPE...
...THAT WE MAY FOLLOW...
"...AND SO HAVE HIM LEAD US TO THE ONE WHOSE MIND HATH EVER BEEN BEHIND THIS RECKLESS BATTLE!"
MY HEAD--HURTIN' MORE THAN EVER!
LIKE SOMEONE WAS CALLIN' ME--MAKING ME HEAD NORTH--!
CRIPES, WHY WON'T IT GO AWAY?


THAT HOUSE BELOW--
THE VOICE'S CALLIN' FROM THERE. I CAN FEEL IT.
THE MAN CALLED CRUSHER CREEL PAUSES BEFORE THE DARKENED HOUSE, FEELING THE BREATH HEAVING IN HIS BREAST, THE BLOOD POUNDING IN HIS VEINS...
SLOWLY, HE STEPS FORWARD...
... AND STOPS AGAIN... SENSING, PERHAPS, AN AURA OF EVIL ABOUT THIS LONELY VERMONT WOODLAND...
... AN EVIL CENTERED IN THE SHADOWED HOUSE BEFORE HIM, CURLED LIKE A LIVING THING WITHIN ITS WOODEN WALLS...
... A THING WHICH NOW UNFOLDS, SOFT FOOTSTEPS ECHOING BEHIND THE PARTLY-OPENED DOOR, BLENDING WITH THE NEAR-WHISPER OF CREAKING WOOD..
WELCOME, MY FRIEND... WE HAVE BEEN EXPECTING THEE.
YOU! I KNOW YOU-- YOU'RE THE GUY WHO MADE ME THIS WAY--
RRRRRR
RRRRRR
RRRRRR
--THE CREEP WHO GAVE ME ALL MY POWERS!

INDEED, CRUSHER CREEL-- AND LET THEE NOT FORGET--
WHAT LOKI HATH GIVEN-- LOKI MAY ALSO TAKE AWAY!
NOW ENTER, CRUSHER CREEL-- AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO ENTRANCE THEE AS I HAVE THIS HAPLESS HUMAN--
FOR, WE'VE PLANS TO MAKE, THOU AND I--
--PLANS WHICH SHALL TRULY SEAL THE DEATH OF THOR--
--AND YEA, THE END OF THE PLANET EARTH!
NEXT: "A NIGHT OF TERROR!"

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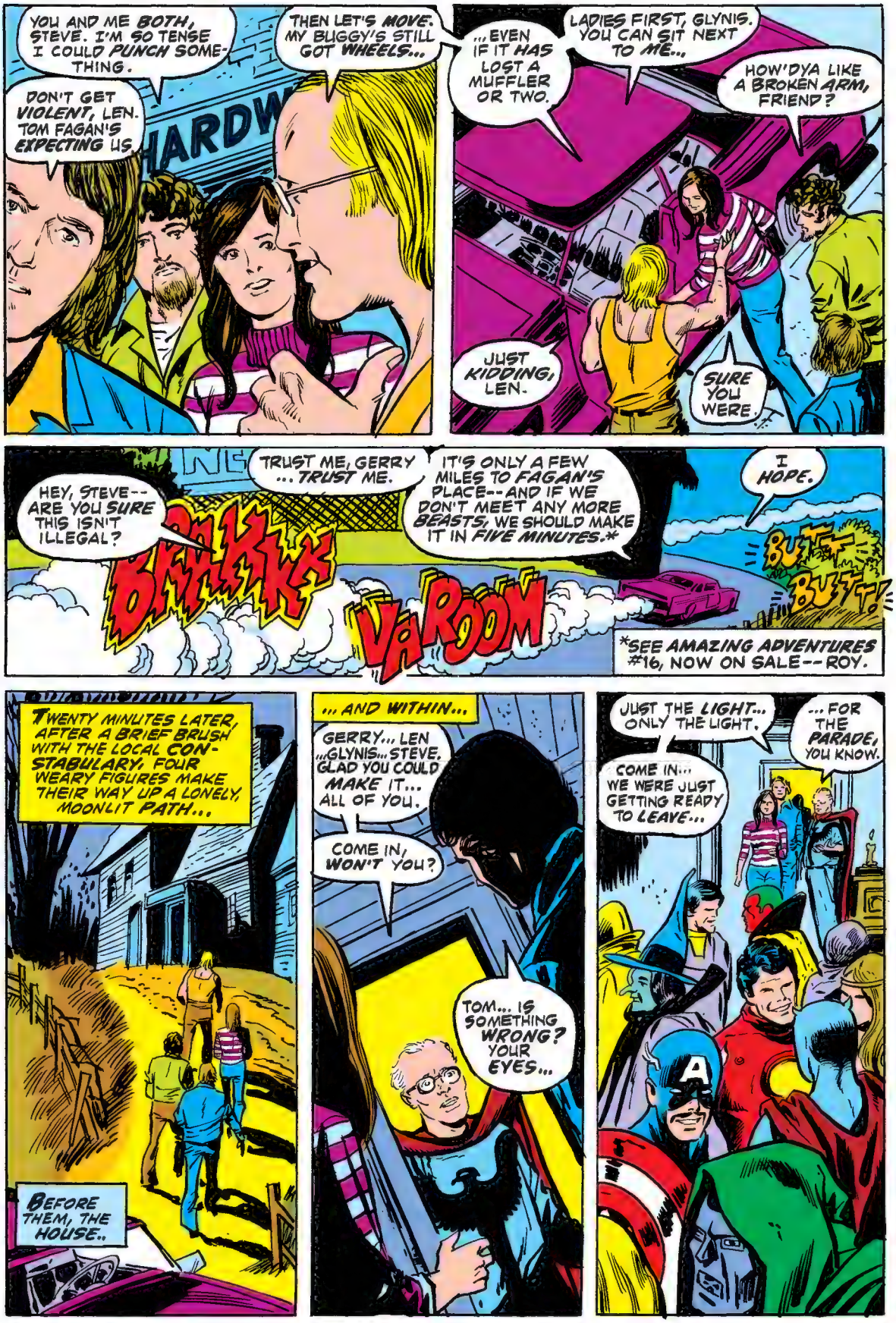
THE MIGHTY
THOR®
SATAN! DIABLO! STRIKE-- IN THE NAME OF LOKI!
SPECIAL HAUNTED HALLOWEEN ISSUE!
WHERE DEMONS DWELL!

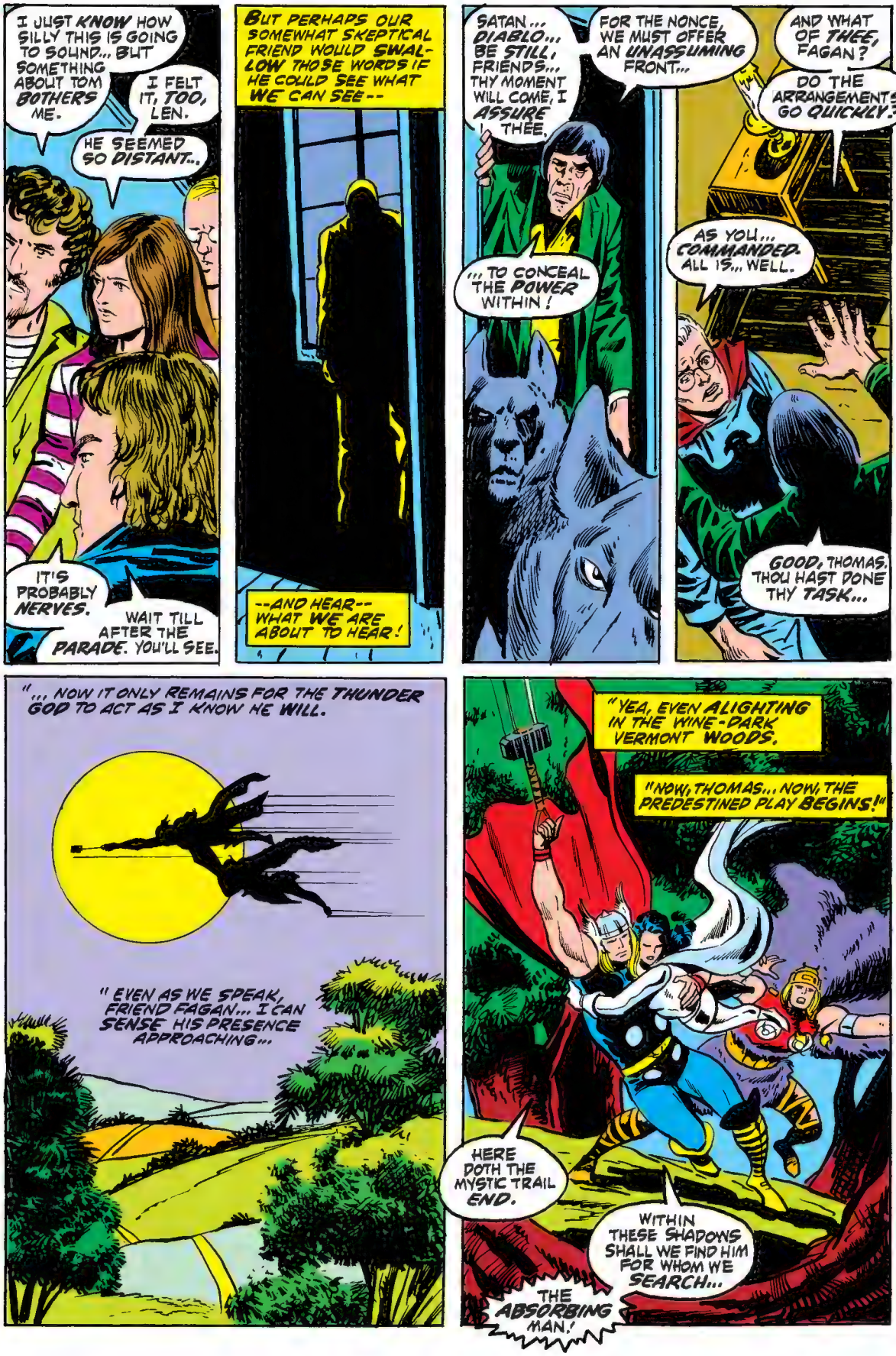
Stan Lee presents: The Mighty Thor™

FIRESWORD!

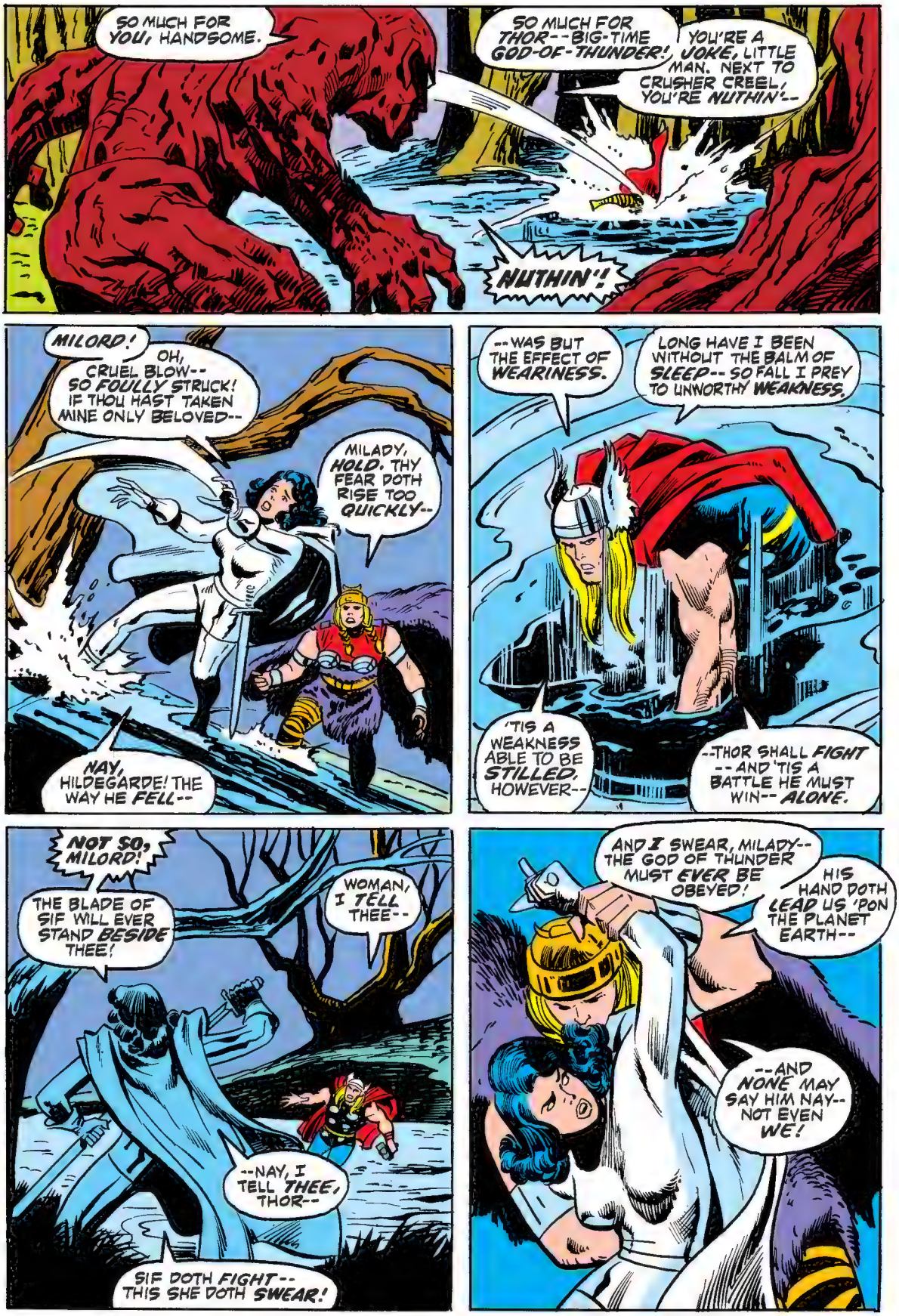
ONCE, THEY CALLED IT, ALL HALLOWS EVE... THE NIGHT OF ALL SAINTS, ALL SOULS.
THESE DAYS IT GOES BY ANOTHER NAME, PERHAPS A TOUCH MORE COLLOQUIAL:
HALLOWEEN... IN THE TOWN OF RUTLAND... SECOND-LARGEST CITY IN THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF VERMONT.
AVENGER
LOOKS LIKE GERRY TOLD US TRUE, PEOPLE.
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A GOOOD TIME!
AND AFTER THE RIDE UP HERE--I CAN SURE USE IT!
1169

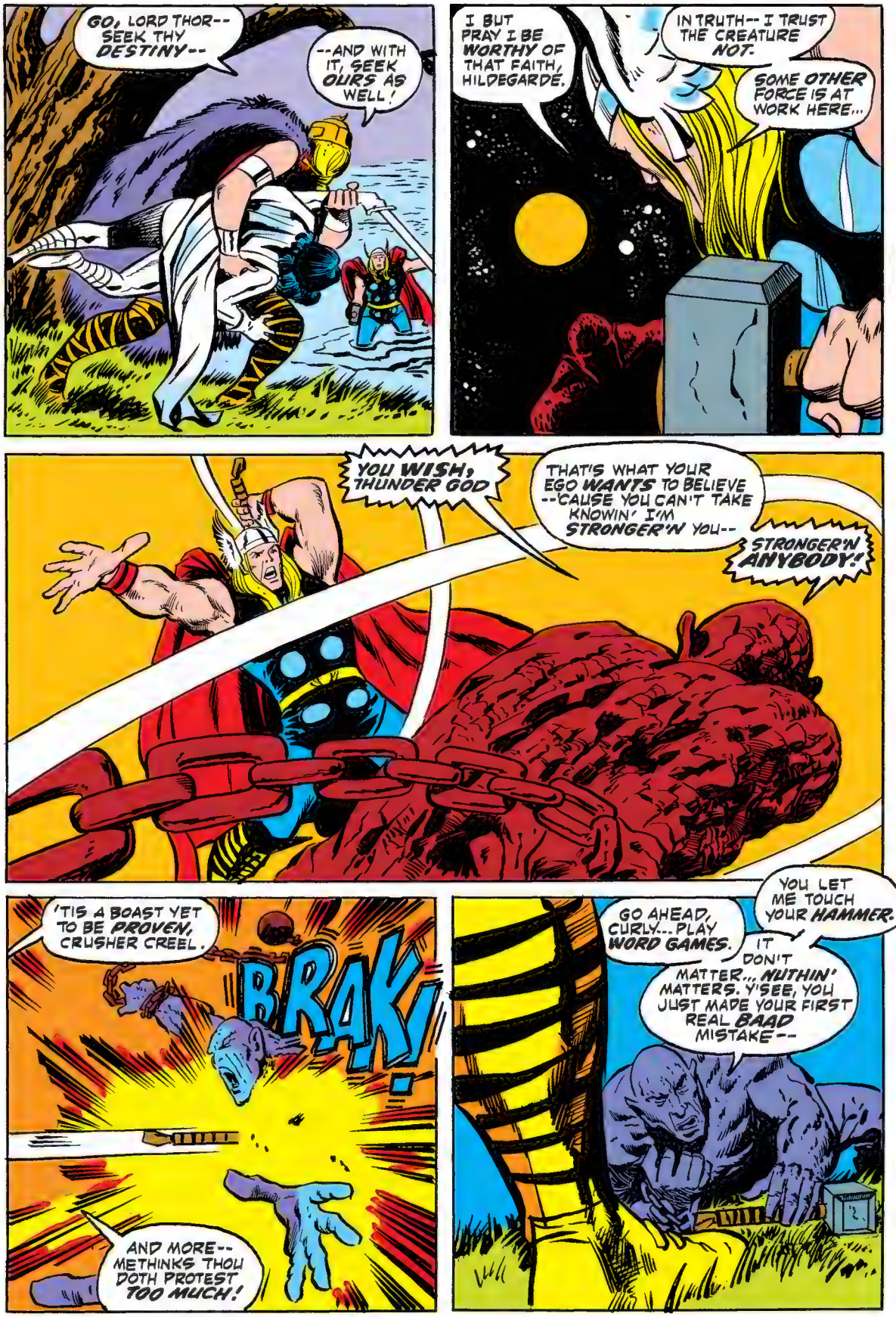
GERRY CONWAY *script* ★ JOHN BUSCEMA *art* ★ VINNIE COLLETTA *inks*
D. VLADIMER *letterer* ★ GLYNIS WEIN *color* ★ M. SEVERIN *good works* ★ R. THOMAS *editor*

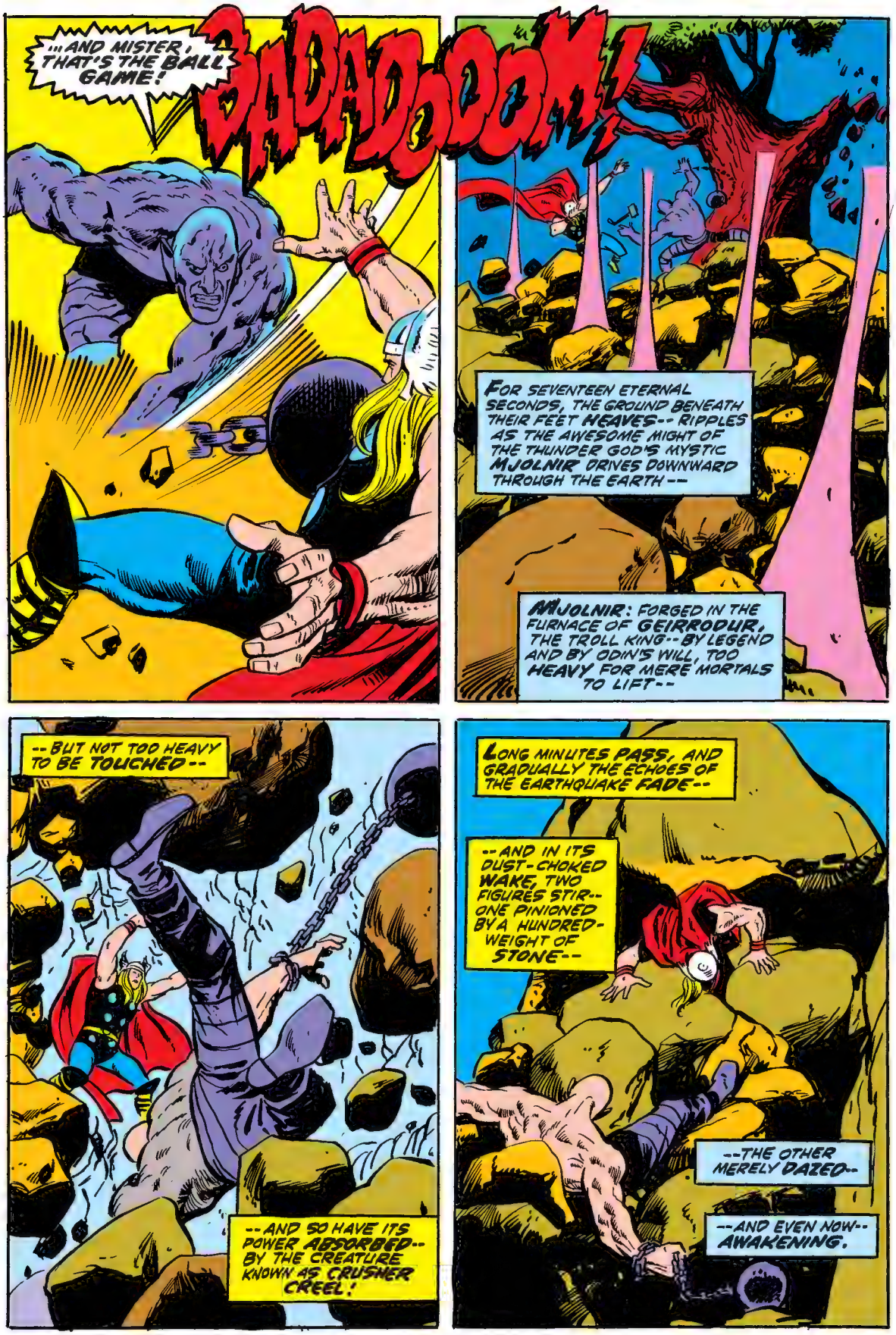

YOU AND ME BOTH, STEVE. I'M SO TENSE I COULD PUNCH SOMETHING.
THEN LET'S MOVE. MY BUGGY'S STILL GOT WHEELS...
DON'T GET VIOLENT, LEN. TOM FAGAN'S EXPECTING US.
...EVEN IF IT HAS LOST A MUFFLER OR TWO.
LADIES FIRST, GLYNIS. YOU CAN SIT NEXT TO ME...
HOW'DYA LIKE A BROKEN ARM, FRIEND?
JUST KIDDING, LEN.
SURE YOU WERE.
HEY, STEVE--ARE YOU SURE THIS ISN'T ILLEGAL?
TRUST ME, GERRY ...TRUST ME.
IT'S ONLY A FEW MILES TO FAGAN'S PLACE--AND IF WE DON'T MEET ANY MORE BEASTS, WE SHOULD MAKE IT IN FIVE MINUTES.*
I HOPE.
BRRRKK
VAROOM
BUFF-BUFF!
*SEE AMAZING ADVENTURES #16, NOW ON SALE--ROY.
TWENTY MINUTES LATER, AFTER A BRIEF BRUSH WITH THE LOCAL CONSTABULARY, FOUR WEARY FIGURES MAKE THEIR WAY UP A LONELY, MOONLIT PATH...
BEFORE THEM, THE HOUSE..
...AND WITHIN...
GERRY... LEN ...GLYNIS... STEVE, GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT... ALL OF YOU.
COME IN, WON'T YOU?
TOM... IS SOMETHING WRONG? YOUR EYES...
JUST THE LIGHT... ONLY THE LIGHT.
...FOR THE PARADE, YOU KNOW.
COME IN... WE WERE JUST GETTING READY TO LEAVE...

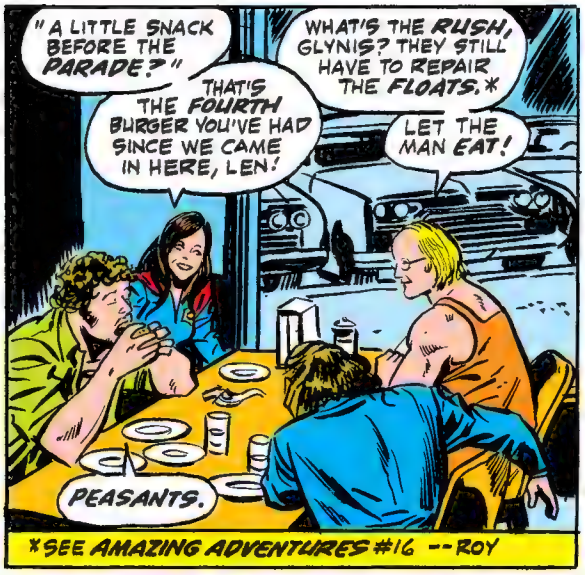

I JUST KNOW HOW SILLY THIS IS GOING TO SOUND... BUT SOMETHING ABOUT TOM BOTHERS ME.
I FELT IT, TOO, LEN.
HE SEEMED SO DISTANT...
IT'S PROBABLY NERVES.
WAIT TILL AFTER THE PARADE. YOU'LL SEE.
BUT PERHAPS OUR SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL FRIEND WOULD SWALLOW THOSE WORDS IF HE COULD SEE WHAT WE CAN SEE--
--AND HEAR-- WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO HEAR!
SATAN... DIABLO... BE STILL, FRIENDS... THY MOMENT WILL COME, I ASSURE THEE.
FOR THE NONCE, WE MUST OFFER AN UNASSUMING FRONT...
...TO CONCEAL THE POWER WITHIN!
AND WHAT OF THEE, FAGAN?
DO THE ARRANGEMENTS GO QUICKLY?
AS YOU... COMMANDED. ALL IS... WELL.
GOOD, THOMAS. THOU HAST DONE THY TASK...
"... NOW IT ONLY REMAINS FOR THE THUNDER GOD TO ACT AS I KNOW HE WILL.
"EVEN AS WE SPEAK, FRIEND FAGAN... I CAN SENSE HIS PRESENCE APPROACHING...
"YEA, EVEN ALIGHTING IN THE WINE-DARK VERMONT WOODS.
"NOW, THOMAS... NOW, THE PREDESTINED PLAY BEGINS!"
HERE DOTH THE MYSTIC TRAIL END.
WITHIN THESE SHADOWS SHALL WE FIND HIM FOR WHOM WE SEARCH...
THE ABSORBING MAN!

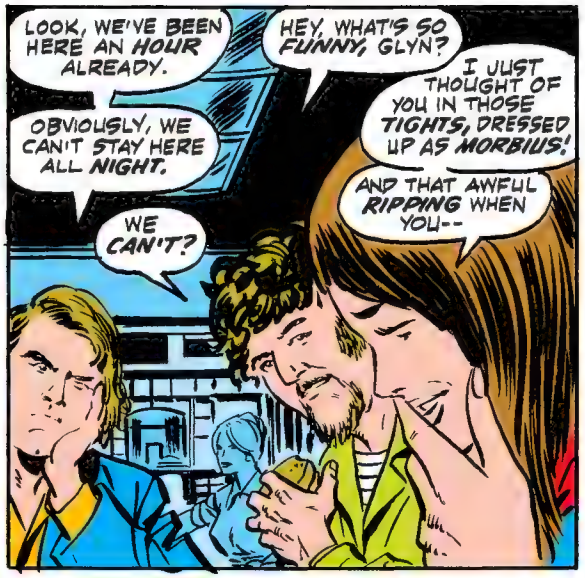
BUT, MILORD... WHAT IF THY HAMMER HATH BEEN MISLED?
ART THOU SURE IT FOLLOWED THE TRAIL LEFT BY THIS CRUSHER CREEL--
--AND NOT SOME OTHER SPORE?
AS SURE AS I NEED BE, MILADY SIF.
...FOR IN TRUTH, THIS FOREST DOTH SEEM ALIVE WITH EVIL...
...YEA, INVADING EVIL...
... A FORCE ALIEN TO THIS LAND, DARK AND DEADLY.
'TIS LIKE A FETID STENCH... THE STINK OF CRUMBLING DECAY.
THAT'S RIGHT, BLONDE BOY... KEEP TALKING.
... AND WHILE YOU'RE YAPPIN', I'LL BE MAKIN' MY MOVE...
...TAKIN' THE ABSORBED POWER OF THIS BLASTED GIANT OAK...
...AND USIN' IT--
NOW!
WHOMP!

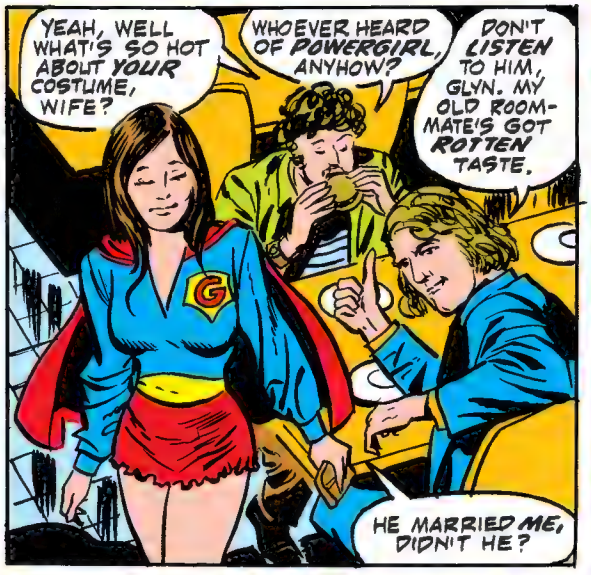

SO MUCH FOR YOU, HANDSOME.
SO MUCH FOR THOR--BIG-TIME GOD-OF-THUNDER!
YOU'RE A JOKE, LITTLE MAN. NEXT TO CRUSHER CREEL, YOU'RE NUTHIN'--
NUTHIN'!
MILORD!
OH, CRUEL BLOW-- SO FOULLY STRUCK! IF THOU HAST TAKEN MINE ONLY BELOVED--
MILADY, HOLD. THY FEAR DOTH RISE TOO QUICKLY--
NAY, HILDEGARDE! THE WAY HE FELL--
--WAS BUT THE EFFECT OF WEARINESS.
LONG HAVE I BEEN WITHOUT THE BALM OF SLEEP-- SO FALL I PREY TO UNWORTHY WEAKNESS.
'TIS A WEAKNESS ABLE TO BE STILLED. HOWEVER--
--THOR SHALL FIGHT -- AND 'TIS A BATTLE HE MUST WIN-- ALONE.
NOT SO, MILORD!
THE BLADE OF SIF WILL EVER STAND BESIDE THEE!
WOMAN, I TELL THEE--
--NAY, I TELL THEE, THOR--
SIF DOTH FIGHT-- THIS SHE DOTH SWEAR!
AND I SWEAR, MILADY-- THE GOD OF THUNDER MUST EVER BE OBEYED!
HIS HAND DOTH LEAD US 'PON THE PLANET EARTH--
--AND NONE MAY SAY HIM NAY-- NOT EVEN WE!

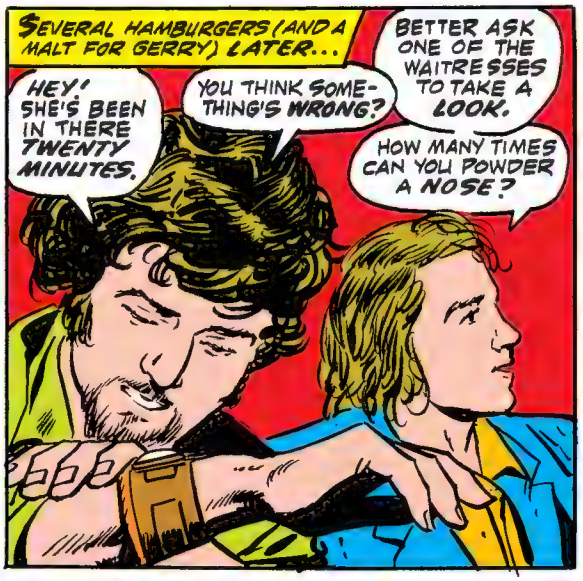

GO, LORD THOR-- SEEK THY DESTINY--
--AND WITH IT, SEEK OURS AS WELL!
I BUT PRAY I BE WORTHY OF THAT FAITH, HILDEGARDE.
IN TRUTH-- I TRUST THE CREATURE NOT.
SOME OTHER FORCE IS AT WORK HERE...
YOU WISH, THUNDER GOD
THAT'S WHAT YOUR EGO WANTS TO BELIEVE --'CAUSE YOU CAN'T TAKE KNOWIN' I'M STRONGER'N YOU--
STRONGER'N ANYBODY!
'TIS A BOAST YET TO BE PROVEN, CRUSHER CREEL.
BRAK!
AND MORE-- METHINKS THOU DOTH PROTEST TOO MUCH!
GO AHEAD, CURLY... PLAY WORD GAMES.
YOU LET ME TOUCH YOUR HAMMER.
IT DON'T MATTER... NUTHIN' MATTERS. Y'SEE, YOU JUST MADE YOUR FIRST REAL BAAD MISTAKE--

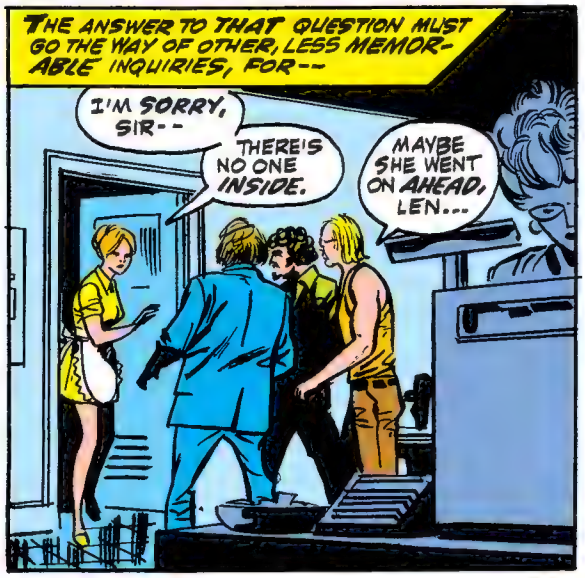

...AND MISTER, THAT'S THE BALL GAME!
BADABOOM!
FOR SEVENTEEN ETERNAL SECONDS, THE GROUND BENEATH THEIR FEET HEAVES-- RIPPLES AS THE AWESOME MIGHT OF THE THUNDER GOD'S MYSTIC MJOLNIR DRIVES DOWNWARD THROUGH THE EARTH --
MJOLNIR: FORGED IN THE FURNACE OF GEIRRODUR, THE TROLL KING-- BY LEGEND AND BY ODIN'S WILL, TOO HEAVY FOR MERE MORTALS TO LIFT--
--BUT NOT TOO HEAVY TO BE TOUCHED--
--AND SO HAVE ITS POWER ABSORBED-- BY THE CREATURE KNOWN AS CRUSHER CREEL!
LONG MINUTES PASS, AND GRADUALLY THE ECHOES OF THE EARTHQUAKE FADE--
--AND IN ITS DUST-CHOKED WAKE, TWO FIGURES STIR-- ONE PINIONED BY A HUNDRED-WEIGHT OF STONE--
--THE OTHER MERELY DAZED--
--AND EVEN NOW-- AWAKENING.


"A LITTLE SNACK BEFORE THE PARADE?"
THAT'S THE FOURTH BURGER YOU'VE HAD SINCE WE CAME IN HERE, LEN!
WHAT'S THE RUSH, GLYNIS? THEY STILL HAVE TO REPAIR THE FLOATS.*
LET THE MAN EAT!
PEASANTS.
*SEE AMAZING ADVENTURES #16 --ROY

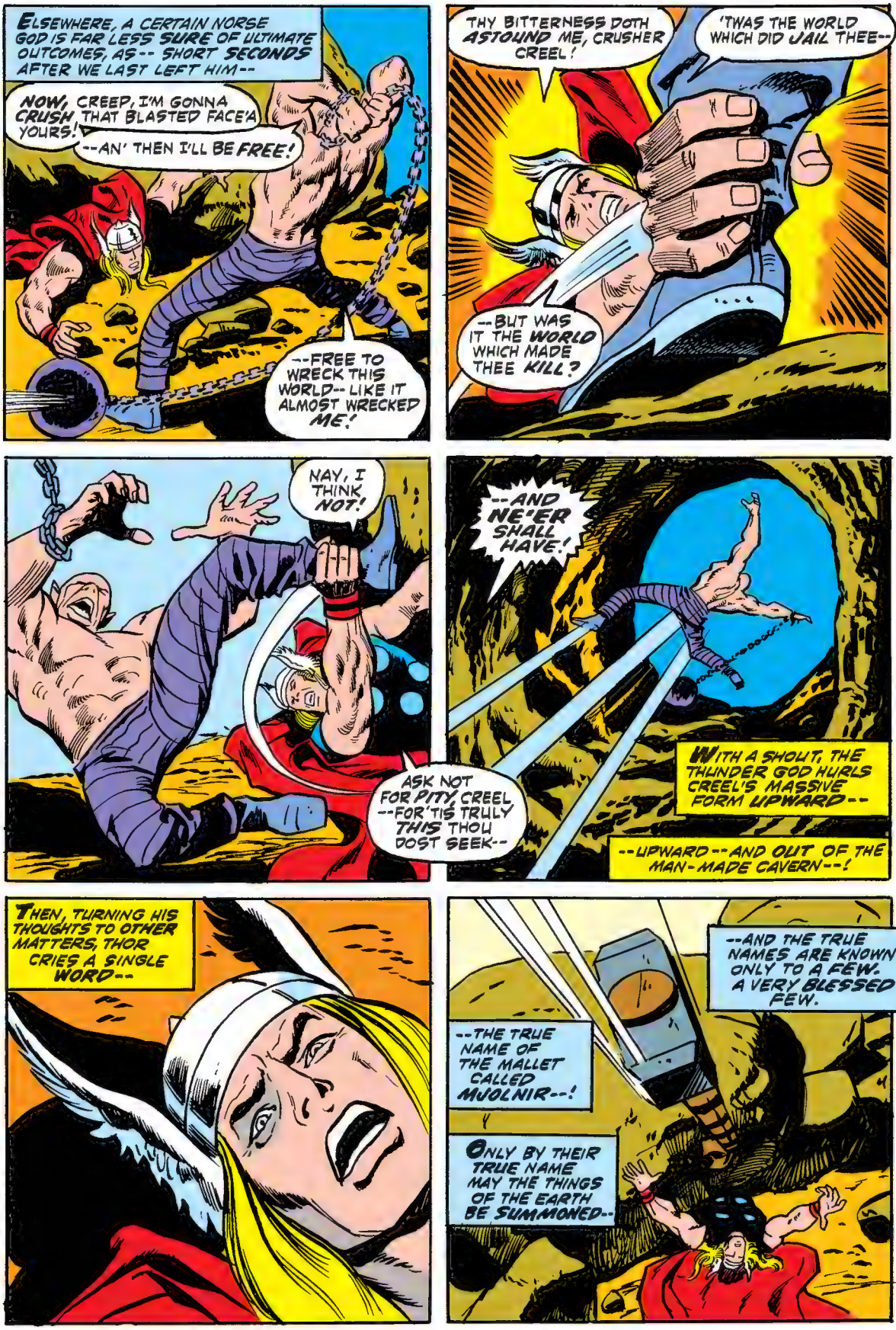

LOOK, WE'VE BEEN HERE AN HOUR ALREADY.
OBVIOUSLY, WE CAN'T STAY HERE ALL NIGHT.
WE CAN'T?
HEY, WHAT'S SO FUNNY, GLYN?
I JUST THOUGHT OF YOU IN THOSE TIGHTS, DRESSED UP AS MORBIUS!
AND THAT AWFUL RIPPING WHEN YOU--


YEAH, WELL WHAT'S SO HOT ABOUT YOUR COSTUME, WIFE?
WHOEVER HEARD OF POWERGIRL, ANYHOW?
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, GLYN. MY OLD ROOMMATE'S GOT ROTTEN TASTE.
HE MARRIED ME, DIDN'T HE?


SEVERAL HAMBURGERS (AND A MALT FOR GERRY) LATER...
HEY! SHE'S BEEN IN THERE TWENTY MINUTES.
YOU THINK SOMETHING'S WRONG?
BETTER ASK ONE OF THE WAITRESSES TO TAKE A LOOK.
HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU POWDER A NOSE?

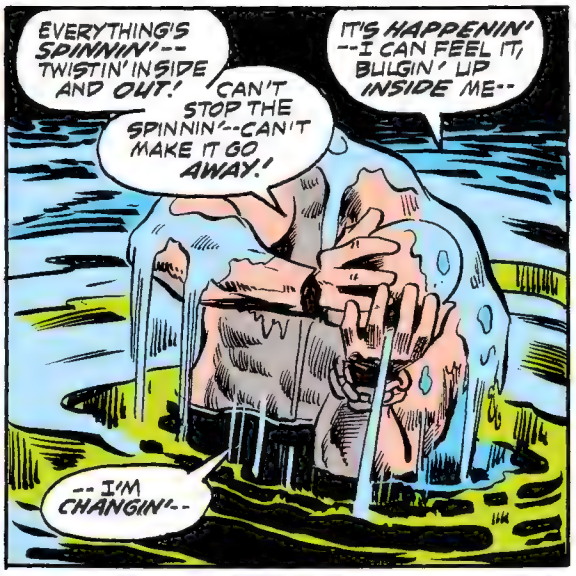

THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION MUST GO THE WAY OF OTHER, LESS MEMORABLE INQUIRIES, FOR--
I'M SORRY, SIR--
THERE'S NO ONE INSIDE.
MAYBE SHE WENT ON AHEAD, LEN...

UH-UH, GUYS. NOT GLYN.
SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO HER... I CAN FEEL IT!
WE'VE GOT TO FIND HER. WE'VE GOT TO!
DON'T WORRY, LEN... WE WILL.


ELSEWHERE, A CERTAIN NORSE GOD IS FAR LESS SURE OF ULTIMATE OUTCOMES, AS-- SHORT SECONDS AFTER WE LAST LEFT HIM--
NOW, CREEP, I'M GONNA CRUSH THAT BLASTED FACE'A YOURS!
--AN' THEN I'LL BE FREE!
--FREE TO WRECK THIS WORLD-- LIKE IT ALMOST WRECKED ME!
THY BITTERNESS DOTH ASTOUND ME, CRUSHER CREEL!
'TWAS THE WORLD WHICH DID JAIL THEE--
--BUT WAS IT THE WORLD WHICH MADE THEE KILL?
NAY, I THINK, NOT!
ASK NOT FOR PITY, CREEL --FOR 'TIS TRULY THIS THOU DOST SEEK--
--AND NE'ER SHALL HAVE!
WITH A SHOUT, THE THUNDER GOD HURLS CREEL'S MASSIVE FORM UPWARD--
--UPWARD--AND OUT OF THE MAN-MADE CAVERN--!
THEN, TURNING HIS THOUGHTS TO OTHER MATTERS, THOR CRIES A SINGLE WORD--
--AND THE TRUE NAMES ARE KNOWN ONLY TO A FEW. A VERY BLESSED FEW.
--THE TRUE NAME OF THE MALLET CALLED MJOLNIR--!
ONLY BY THEIR TRUE NAME MAY THE THINGS OF THE EARTH BE SUMMONED--

-- AND OF THOSE FEW IS THOR--
KRAZAKK!
THOR, GOD OF THUNDER!
THOU DIDST SPEAK OF BEING FREE, CRUSHER CREEL.
ONLY NOW DO I REMEMBER OTHER WORDS --WORDS OF A PAIN WHICH FORCED THEE TO SEEK ME OUT--
--AND SO DID LEAD TO OUR BATTLE IN NEW YORK!
I SAY A LOTTA THINGS, LONGHAIR--
--THAT DON'T MEAN ANY OF 'EM ARE TRUE!
THOU DOST SEEK TO EVADE MY MEANING!
KNOW THOU THIS, CRUSHER CREEL--
--THOU SHALT LIE NO MORE!
CRA-K!

THE WATER! NO--THAT'S NOT WHAT I PLANNED-- NOT THE--
NOOOOO!


EVERYTHING'S SPINNIN'-- TWISTIN' INSIDE AND OUT!
CAN'T STOP THE SPINNIN'--CAN'T MAKE IT GO AWAY!
IT'S HAPPENIN' --I CAN FEEL IT, BULGIN' UP INSIDE ME--
-- I'M CHANGIN'--

--CHANGIN'-- CHANGIN'-- CHANGINNNNNN'--

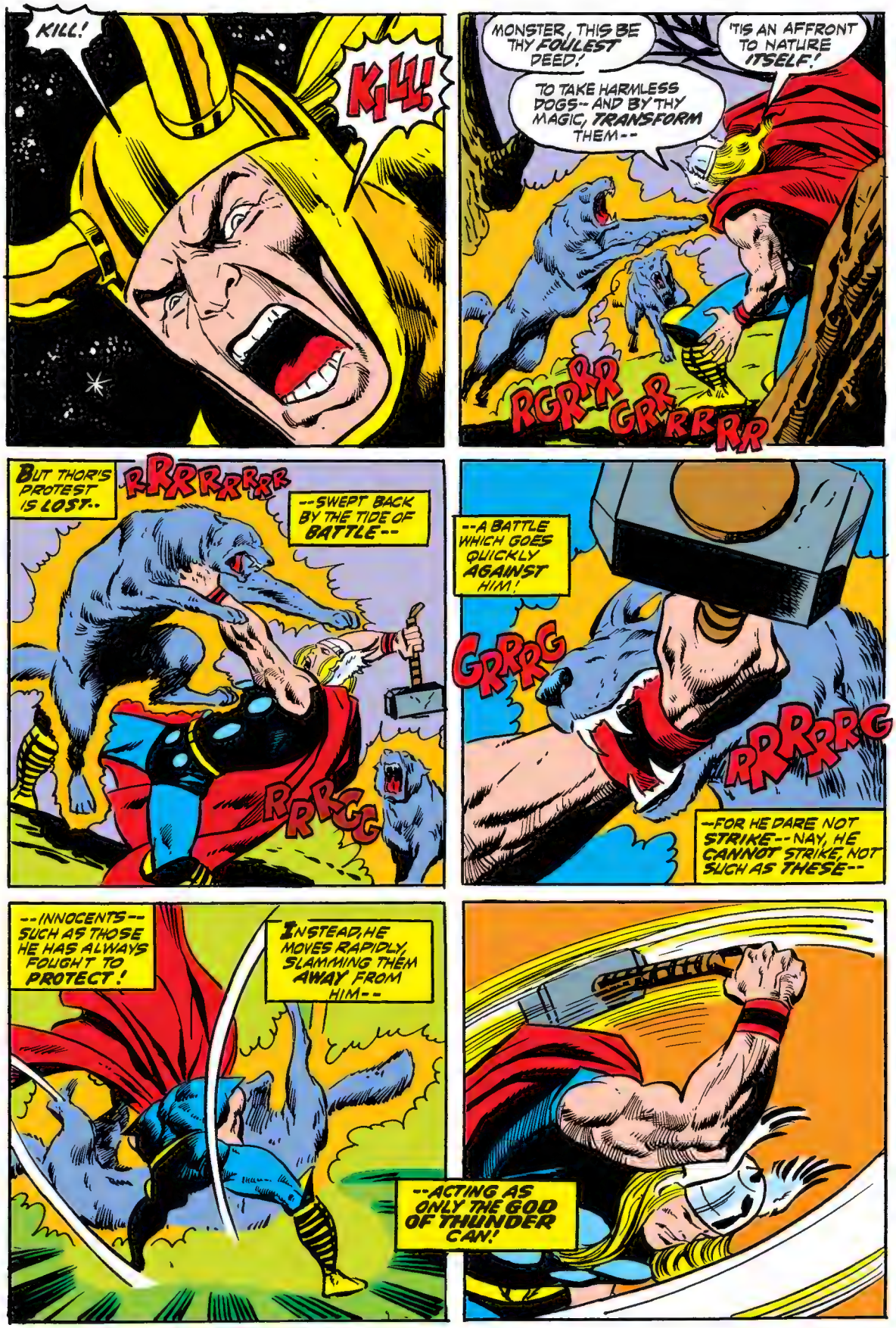
'TWAS NOT MY AIM THAT HE SHOULD END SO.
BUT, IN A WAY, 'TIS FITTING, THAT A MAN WHO DID LIVE BY HATRED AND DEATH...
... SHOULD FIND HIS DEATH BY... ABSORBING THE WATERS OF LIFE.

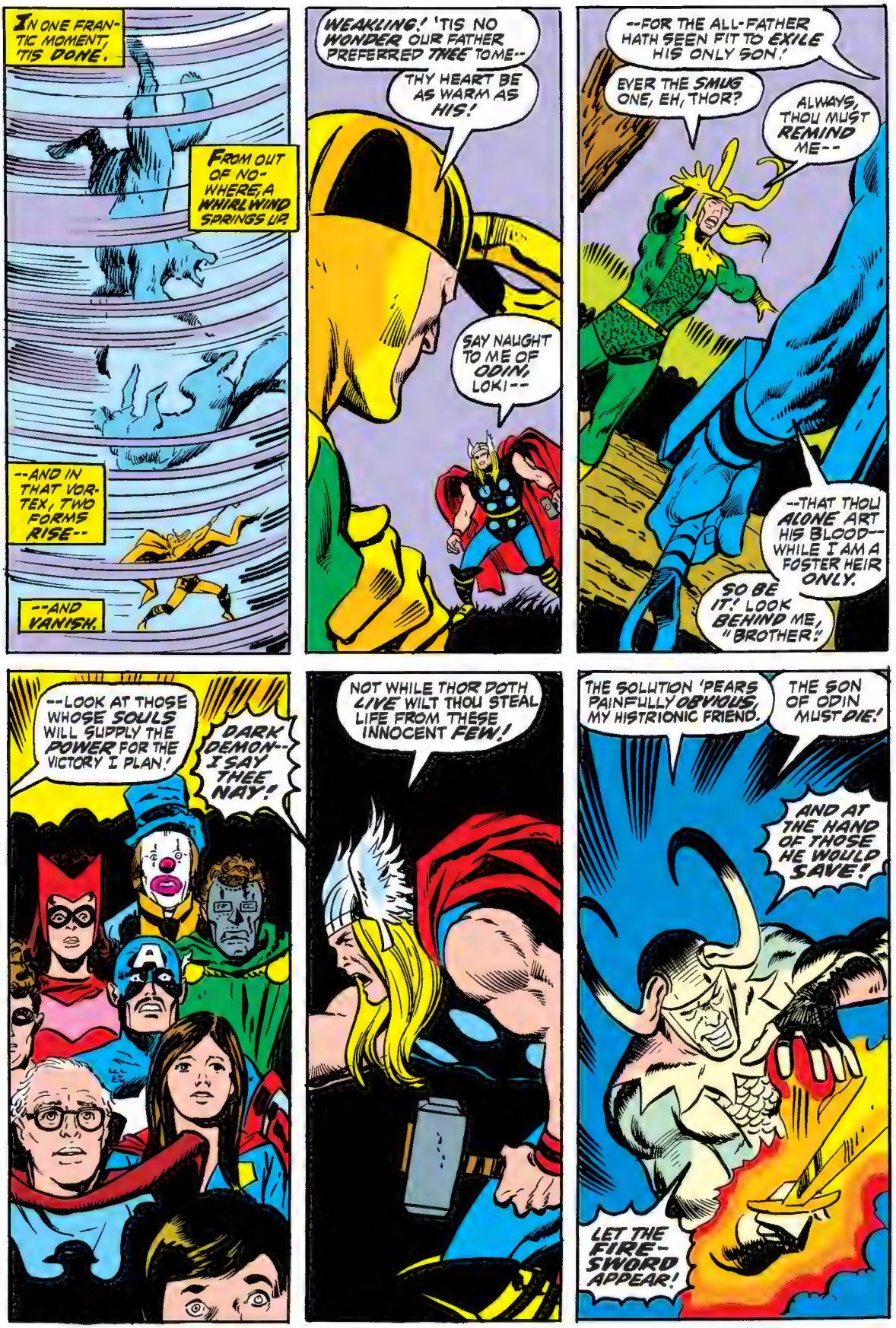
NOBLE SENTIMENTS, THUNDER GOD... AND WELL MAY THEY SOON APPLY TO THEE.

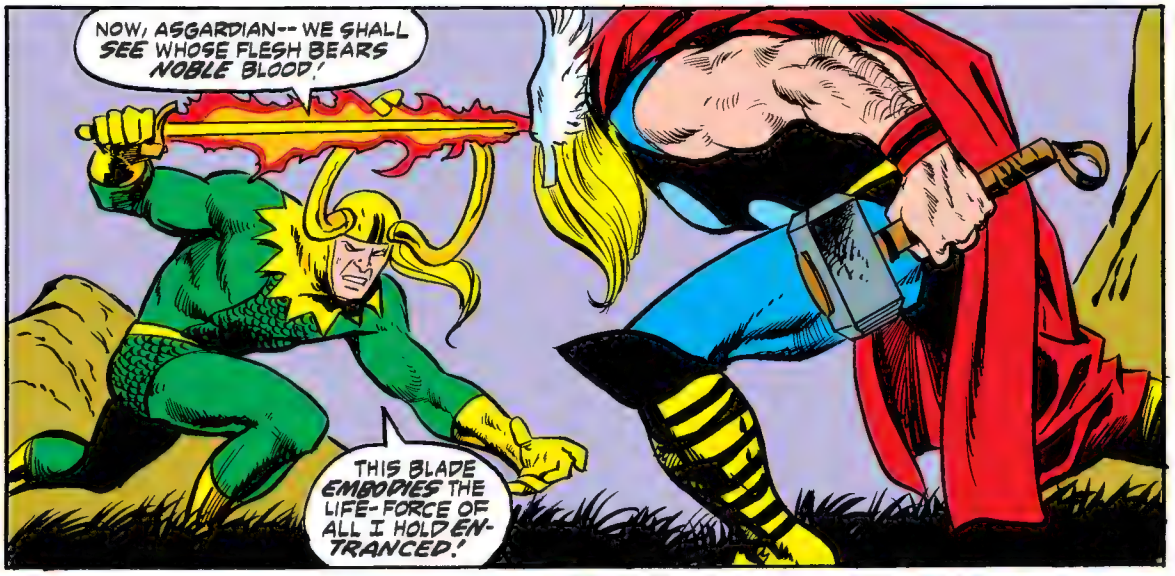
TURN, FOOL! ...TURN, AND FACE THE IMAGE OF THY EXECUTIONER!

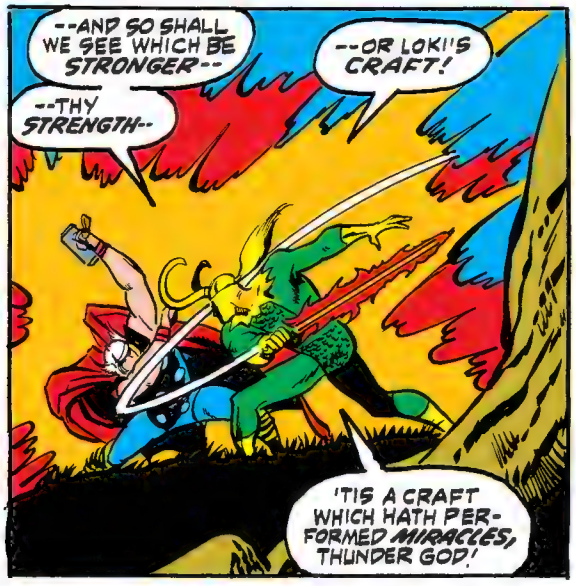
NAY
NOT THEE! IT CANNOT BE THEE!

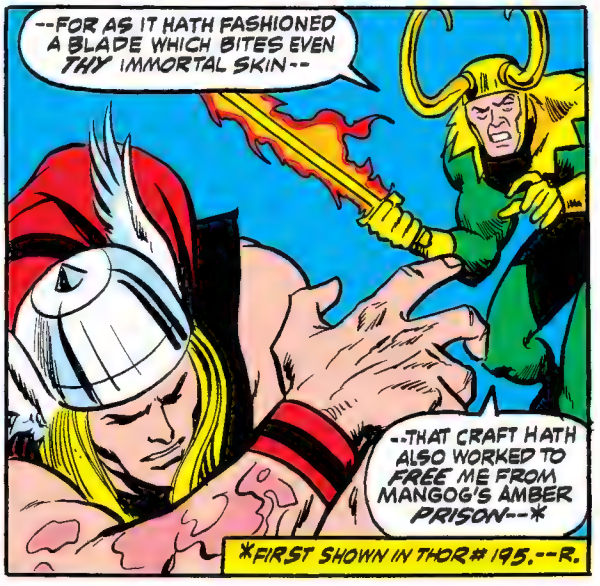
LOKI: GOD OF MISCHIEF ... AND MADNESS!
THOU DOST FLATTER ME, BELOVED HALF-BROTHER.
LOKI BE NOT GOD OF MADNESS... MERELY ITS MANIPULATOR...
"FOR JUST AS I DID USE THAT MISGUIDED MISANTHROPE TO LURE THEE HERE TO MYSTIC NEW ENGLAND...
"...SO DO I USE THE MADNESS OF THE WORLD AROUND ME... TO KEEP THEE HERE... AND ULTIMATELY...
...DESTROY THEE!
SATAN... DIABLO... ON MY COMMAND...
RRRRR
RRRGGGRRRR
RRRGGGRRRRRRR


KILL!
KILL!
MONSTER, THIS BE THY FOULEST DEED!
TO TAKE HARMLESS DOGS-- AND BY THY MAGIC, TRANSFORM THEM--
'TIS AN AFFRONT TO NATURE ITSELF!
RGRRR GRR RR RR
BUT THOR'S PROTEST IS LOST..
RRRRRRRR
--SWEPT BACK BY THE TIDE OF BATTLE--
RRRGG
--A BATTLE WHICH GOES QUICKLY AGAINST HIM!
GRRRG
RRRRRG
--FOR HE DARE NOT STRIKE--NAY, HE CANNOT STRIKE, NOT SUCH AS THESE--
--INNOCENTS-- SUCH AS THOSE HE HAS ALWAYS FOUGHT TO PROTECT!
INSTEAD, HE MOVES RAPIDLY, SLAMMING THEM AWAY FROM HIM--
--ACTING AS ONLY THE GOD OF THUNDER CAN!


IN ONE FRANTIC MOMENT, 'TIS DONE.
FROM OUT OF NOWHERE, A WHIRLWIND SPRINGS UP!
--AND IN THAT VORTEX, TWO FORMS RISE--
--AND VANISH.
WEAKLING! 'TIS NO WONDER OUR FATHER PREFERRED THEE TO ME--
THY HEART BE AS WARM AS HIS!
SAY NAUGHT TO ME OF ODIN, LOKI--
--FOR THE ALL-FATHER HATH SEEN FIT TO EXILE HIS ONLY SON!
EVER THE SMUG ONE, EH, THOR?
ALWAYS, THOU MUST REMIND ME--
--THAT THOU ALONE ART HIS BLOOD-- WHILE I AM A FOSTER HEIR ONLY.
SO BE IT! LOOK BEHIND ME, "BROTHER!"
--LOOK AT THOSE WHOSE SOULS WILL SUPPLY THE POWER FOR THE VICTORY I PLAN!
DARK DEMON-- I SAY THEE NAY!
NOT WHILE THOR DOTH LIVE WILT THOU STEAL LIFE FROM THESE INNOCENT FEW!
THE SOLUTION 'PEARS PAINFULLY OBVIOUS, MY HISTRIONIC FRIEND.
THE SON OF ODIN MUST DIE!
AND AT THE HAND OF THOSE HE WOULD SAVE!
LET THE FIRE-SWORD APPEAR!

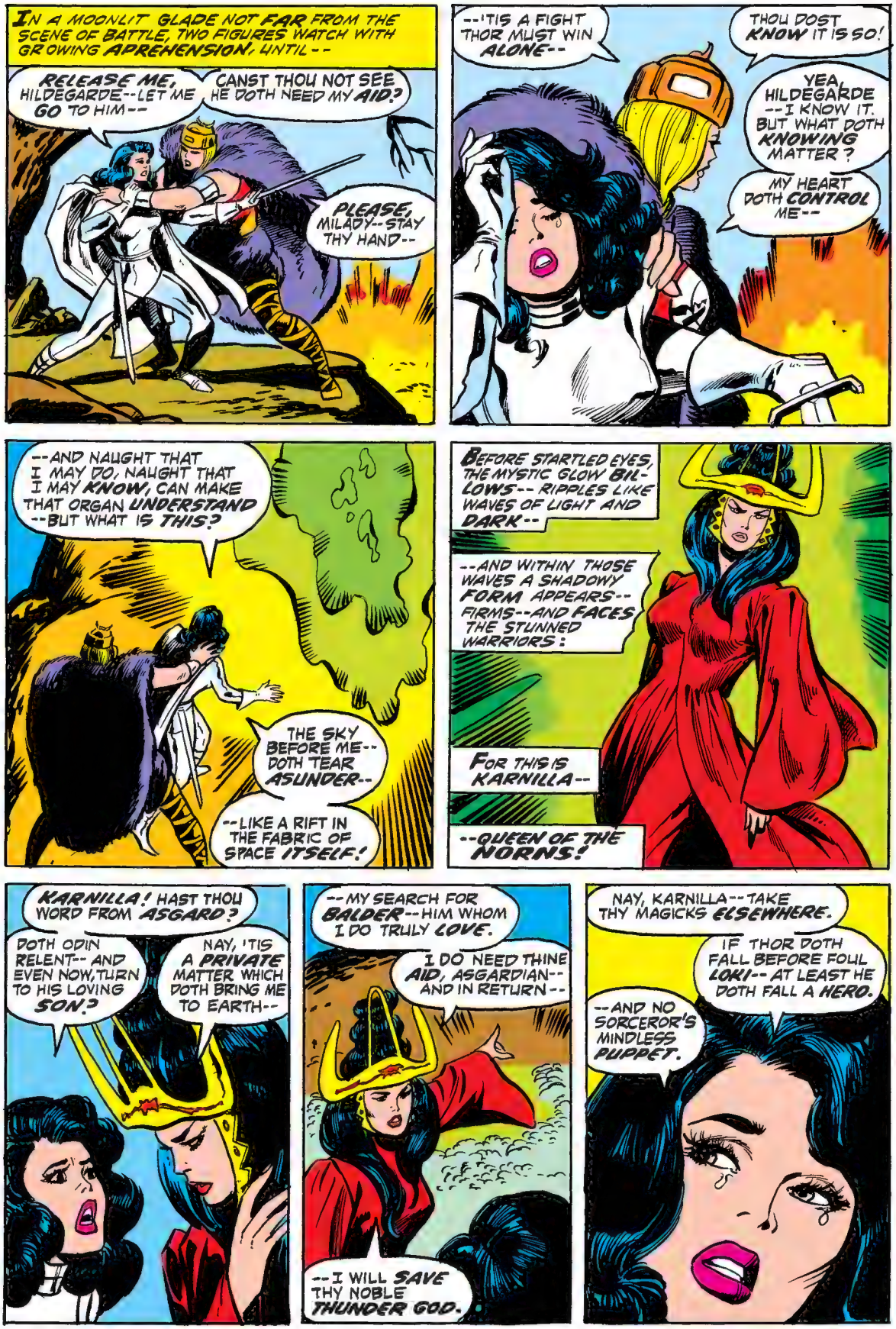

NOW, ASGARDIAN-- WE SHALL SEE WHOSE FLESH BEARS NOBLE BLOOD!
THIS BLADE EMBODIES THE LIFE-FORCE OF ALL I HOLD ENTRANCED!

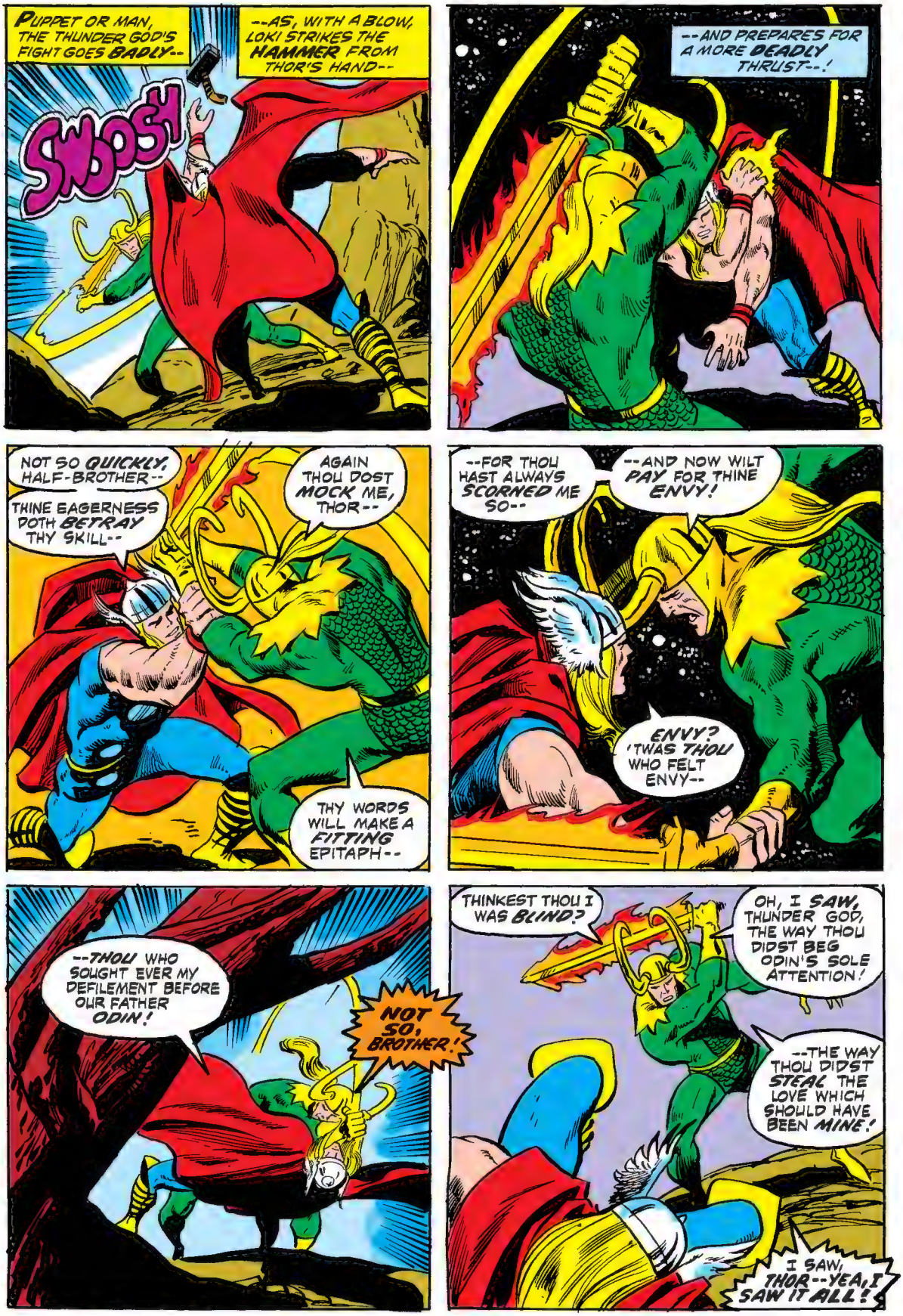

--AND SO SHALL WE SEE WHICH BE STRONGER--
--OR LOKI'S CRAFT!
--THY STRENGTH--
'TIS A CRAFT WHICH HATH PERFORMED MIRACLES, THUNDER GOD!

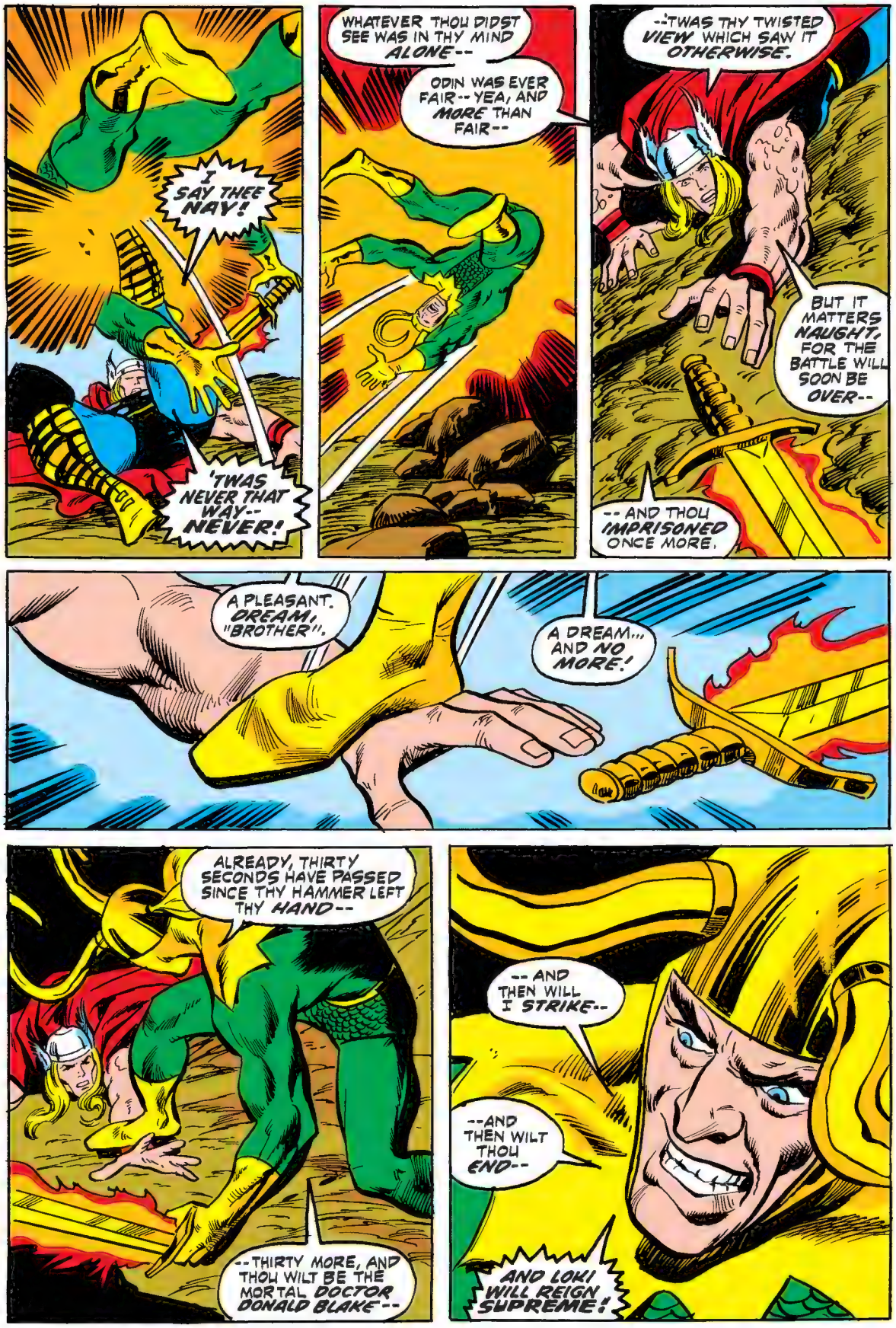

--FOR AS IT HATH FASHIONED A BLADE WHICH BITES EVEN THY IMMORTAL SKIN--
--THAT CRAFT HATH ALSO WORKED TO FREE ME FROM MANGOG'S AMBER PRISON--*
*FIRST SHOWN IN THOR #195.--R.

--BY GIVING ME CONTROL O'ER THE VERY FIBRE OF THE PRISON ITSELF--
--CONTROL ENOUGH TO LEVITATE THE GLASS-LIKE SHELL--
--AND TO FLY IT HERE--*
*LAST ISH. --ROY AGAIN!

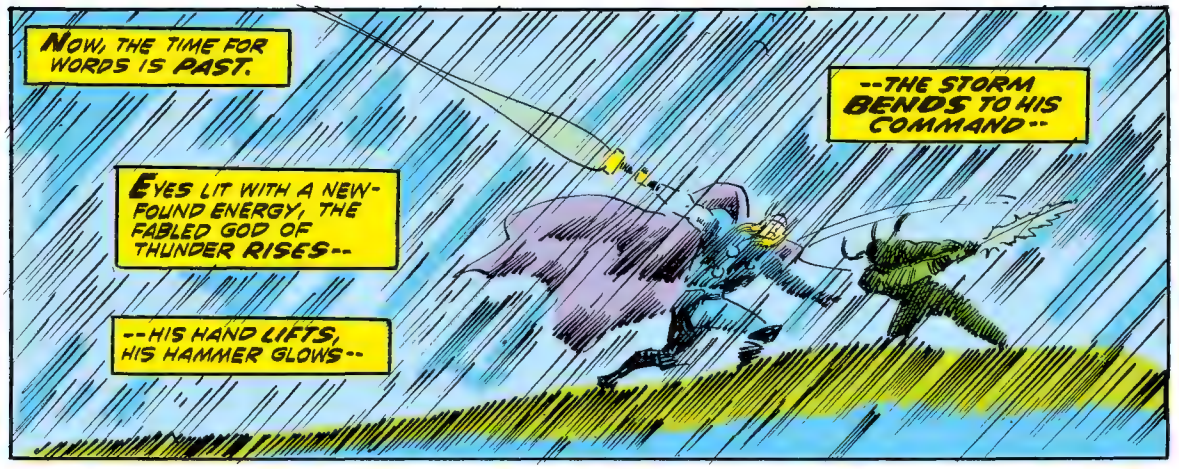
--TO THEE!
DIE, MY BROTHER--
DIE!

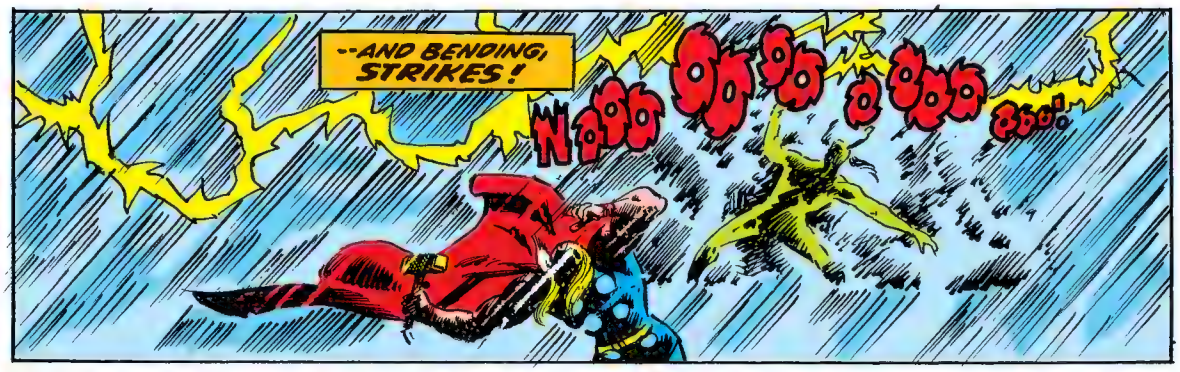

IN A MOONLIT GLADE NOT FAR FROM THE SCENE OF BATTLE, TWO FIGURES WATCH WITH GROWING APREHENSION, UNTIL--
RELEASE ME, HILDEGARDE--LET ME GO TO HIM--
CANST THOU NOT SEE HE DOTH NEED MY AID?
PLEASE, MILADY--STAY THY HAND--
--'TIS A FIGHT THOR MUST WIN ALONE--
THOU DOST KNOW IT IS SO!
YEA, HILDEGARDE --I KNOW IT. BUT WHAT DOTH KNOWING MATTER?
MY HEART DOTH CONTROL ME--
--AND NAUGHT THAT I MAY DO, NAUGHT THAT I MAY KNOW, CAN MAKE THAT ORGAN UNDERSTAND --BUT WHAT IS THIS?
THE SKY BEFORE ME-- DOTH TEAR ASUNDER--
--LIKE A RIFT IN THE FABRIC OF SPACE ITSELF!
BEFORE STARTLED EYES, THE MYSTIC GLOW BILLOWS-- RIPPLES LIKE WAVES OF LIGHT AND DARK--
--AND WITHIN THOSE WAVES A SHADOWY FORM APPEARS-- FIRMS--AND FACES THE STUNNED WARRIORS:
FOR THIS IS KARNILLA--
--QUEEN OF THE NORNS!
KARNILLA! HAST THOU WORD FROM ASGARD?
DOTH ODIN RELENT-- AND EVEN NOW, TURN TO HIS LOVING SON?
NAY, 'TIS A PRIVATE MATTER WHICH DOTH BRING ME TO EARTH--
--MY SEARCH FOR BALDER--HIM WHOM I DO TRULY LOVE.
I DO NEED THINE AID, ASGARDIAN-- AND IN RETURN--
--I WILL SAVE THY NOBLE THUNDER GOD.
NAY, KARNILLA--TAKE THY MAGICKS ELSEWHERE.
IF THOR DOTH FALL BEFORE FOUL LOKI-- AT LEAST HE DOTH FALL A HERO.
--AND NO SORCEROR'S MINDLESS PUPPET.

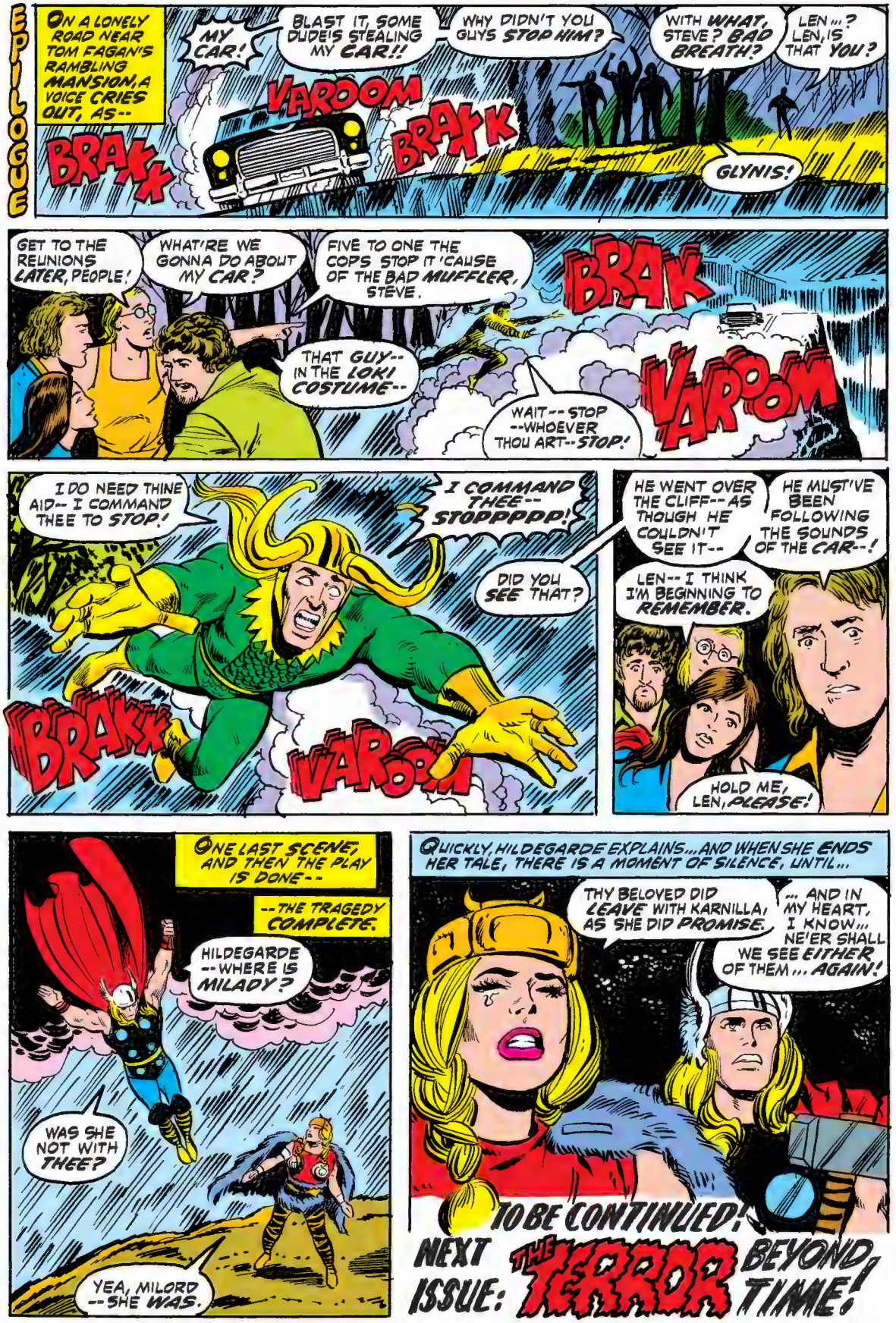

PUPPET OR MAN, THE THUNDER GOD'S FIGHT GOES BADLY--
--AS, WITH A BLOW, LOKI STRIKES THE HAMMER FROM THOR'S HAND--
SWOOSH
--AND PREPARES FOR A MORE DEADLY THRUST--!
NOT SO QUICKLY, HALF-BROTHER--
THINE EAGERNESS DOTH BETRAY THY SKILL--
AGAIN THOU DOST MOCK ME, THOR--
THY WORDS WILL MAKE A FITTING EPITAPH--
--FOR THOU HAST ALWAYS SCORNED ME SO--
--AND NOW WILT PAY FOR THINE ENVY!
ENVY? 'TWAS THOU WHO FELT ENVY--
--THOU WHO SOUGHT EVER MY DEFILEMENT BEFORE OUR FATHER ODIN!
NOT SO, BROTHER!
THINKEST THOU I WAS BLIND?
OH, I SAW, THUNDER GOD, THE WAY THOU DIDST BEG ODIN'S SOLE ATTENTION!
--THE WAY THOU DIDST STEAL THE LOVE WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE!
I SAW, THOR--YEA, I SAW IT ALL!


I SAY THEE NAY!
'TWAS NEVER THAT WAY-- NEVER!
WHATEVER THOU DIDST SEE WAS IN THY MIND ALONE--
ODIN WAS EVER FAIR-- YEA, AND MORE THAN FAIR--
--'TWAS THY TWISTED VIEW WHICH SAW IT OTHERWISE.
BUT IT MATTERS NAUGHT, FOR THE BATTLE WILL SOON BE OVER--
-- AND THOU IMPRISONED ONCE MORE.
A PLEASANT DREAM, "BROTHER".
A DREAM... AND NO MORE!
ALREADY, THIRTY SECONDS HAVE PASSED SINCE THY HAMMER LEFT THY HAND--
--THIRTY MORE, AND THOU WILT BE THE MORTAL DOCTOR DONALD BLAKE--
-- AND THEN WILL I STRIKE--
--AND THEN WILT THOU END--
AND LOKI WILL REIGN SUPREME!

NAY--IT CANNOT BE!
NORN QUEEN, THOU MUST HELP-- THOU MUST!
IN BUT TWENTY BRIEF AND PASSING SECONDS-- THOR WILL BE THUNDER GOD NO MORE!
THEN THOU DOST AGREE TO AID ME IN MY QUEST?
WHAT ELSE MAY I DO?
HAVE I A CHOICE?
NAY, MILADY... NO CHOICE AT ALL.
HEAVENS ABOVE, SEAS BELOW-- TO THIS PLACE MAY THY POWERS FLOW...
SHE WHO DOTH HOLD THE SACRED NORN LEAVE NOT HER FERVID PLEA FORLORN--
COME FROM DARKNESS, COME FROM LIGHT... TAKE UP THIS BLESSED, SACRED FIGHT...
AND WHEN THE NORN QUEEN DOTH COMMAND... BLESS WITH RAIN THIS NAKED LAND!
WITH A SIGH AND A CRY, THE SKIES OPEN--
--AND FILL THE NIGHT WITH THUNDER!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?
ONE INSTANT THE TWILIGHT IS CLEAR-- AND THE NEXT--
THE ELEMENTS THEMSELVES DO REBEL AGAINST THEE, LOKI.
THEIR BREATH... DOTH REVIVE MY FADING STRENGTH...
... AND DOTH GIVE ME THE WILL I NEED... TO SPEAK THE PROPER WORDS...
...THAT ONCE MORE, MJOLNIR WILL BE MINE!




--AND BENDING, STRIKES!
KRAKOOO


ON A LONELY ROAD NEAR TOM FAGAN'S RAMBLING MANSION, A VOICE CRIES OUT, AS--
MY CAR!
BLAST IT, SOME DUDE'S STEALING MY CAR!!
WHY DIDN'T YOU GUYS STOP HIM?
WITH WHAT, STEVE? BAD BREATH?
LEN...? LEN, IS THAT YOU?
VAROOM
BRAKK
BRAKK
GLYNIS!
GET TO THE REUNIONS LATER, PEOPLE!
WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO ABOUT MY CAR?
FIVE TO ONE THE COPS STOP IT 'CAUSE OF THE BAD MUFFLER, STEVE.
THAT GUY-- IN THE LOKI COSTUME--
BRAK
VAROOM
WAIT-- STOP --WHOEVER THOU ART-- STOP!
I DO NEED THINE AID-- I COMMAND THEE TO STOP!
I COMMAND THEE-- STOPPPPP!
DID YOU SEE THAT?
BRAKK
VAROOM
HE WENT OVER THE CLIFF-- AS THOUGH HE COULDN'T SEE IT--
HE MUST'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THE SOUNDS OF THE CAR--!
LEN-- I THINK I'M BEGINNING TO REMEMBER.
HOLD ME, LEN, PLEASE!
ONE LAST SCENE, AND THEN THE PLAY IS DONE--
--THE TRAGEDY COMPLETE.
HILDEGARDE --WHERE IS MILADY?
WAS SHE NOT WITH THEE?
YEA, MILORD --SHE WAS.
QUICKLY, HILDEGARDE EXPLAINS... AND WHEN SHE ENDS HER TALE, THERE IS A MOMENT OF SILENCE, UNTIL...
THY BELOVED DID LEAVE WITH KARNILLA, AS SHE DID PROMISE.
... AND IN MY HEART, I KNOW... NE'ER SHALL WE SEE EITHER OF THEM... AGAIN!
TO BE CONTINUED!
NEXT ISSUE: THE TERROR BEYOND TIME!

THOR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
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THE MIGHTY
THOR®
WHEN MY LEFT HAND TOUCHES YOU, YOU FREEZE!
AND WHEN MY RIGHT HAND CONNECTS--EVEN A THUNDER GOD CAN DIE BY FIRE!
NEVER BEFORE--SUCH BLUDGEONING BATTLE!
GOD OF THUNDER VERSUS MECURIO! THE MAN FROM THE DEATH DIMENSION

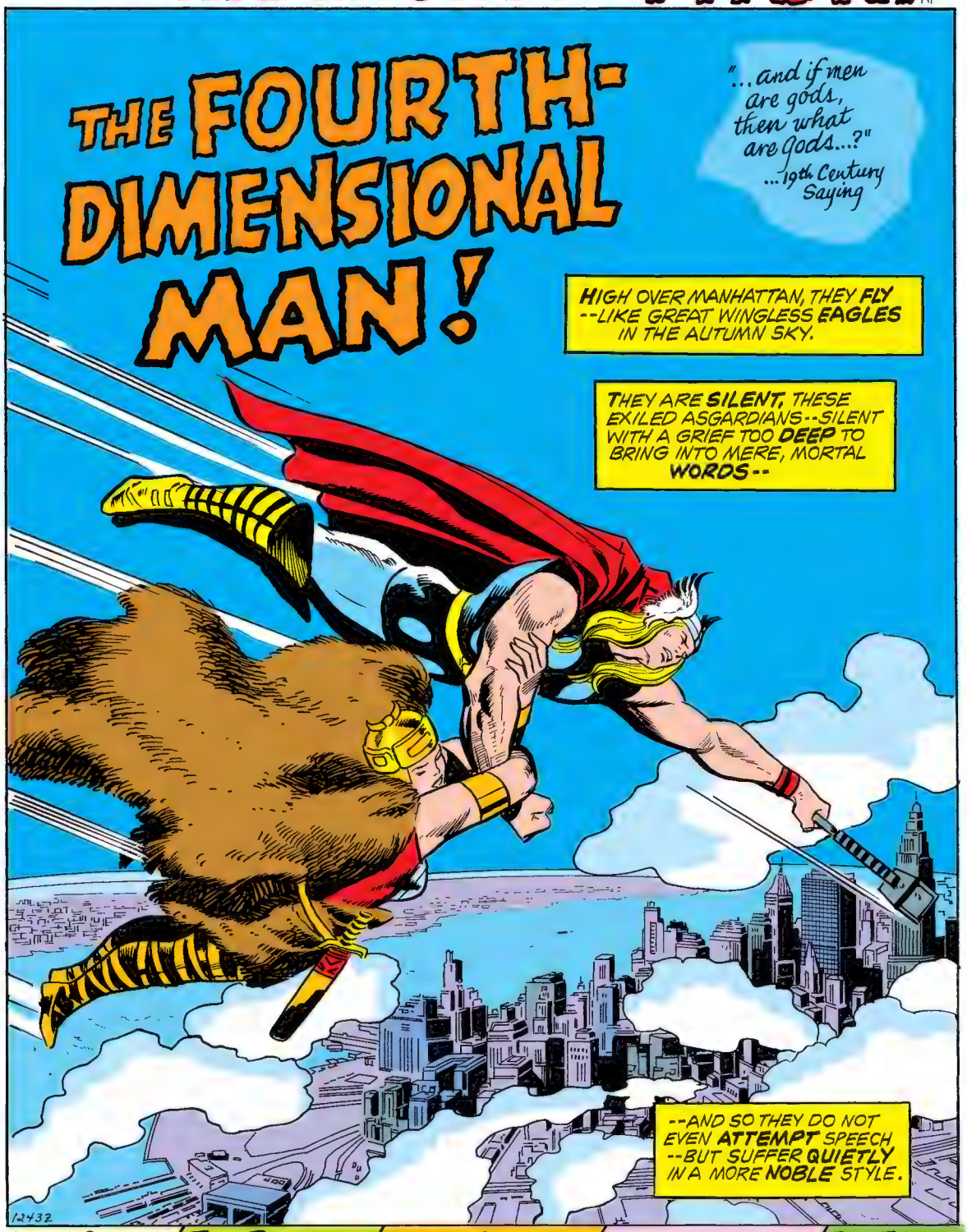
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL MAN!

"...and if men are gods, then what are gods...?"
...19th Century Saying

HIGH OVER MANHATTAN, THEY **FLY** --LIKE GREAT WINGLESS **EAGLES** IN THE AUTUMN SKY.

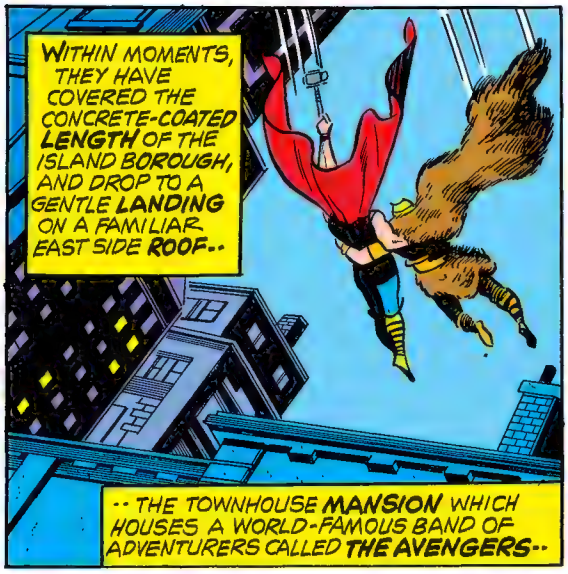
THEY ARE **SILENT**, THESE EXILED ASGARDIANS--SILENT WITH A GRIEF TOO **DEEP** TO BRING INTO MERE, MORTAL **WORDS**--

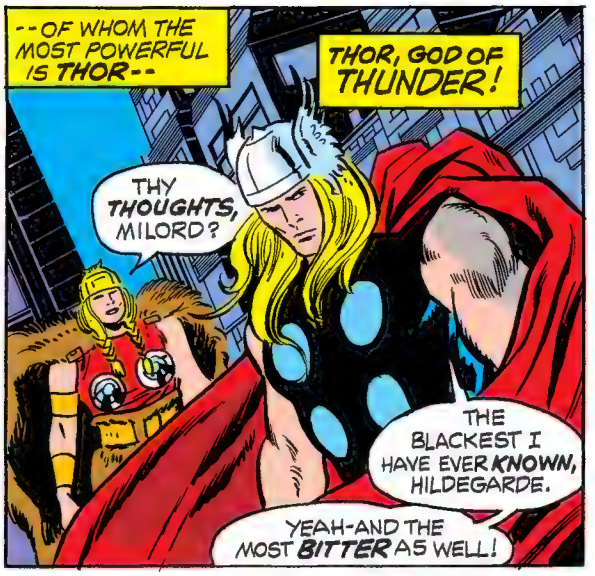


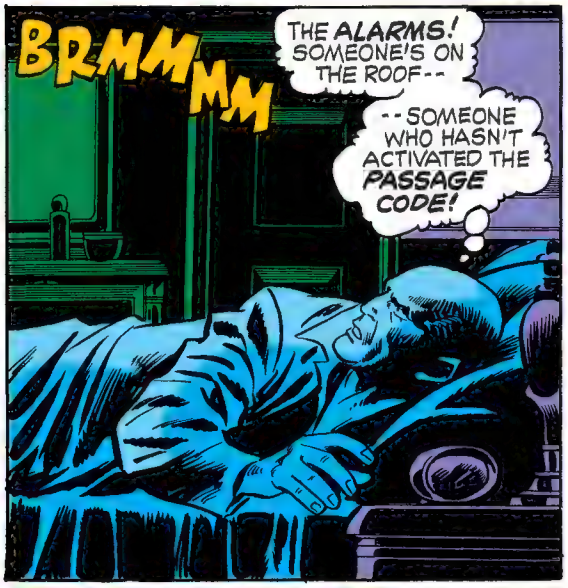
--AND SO THEY DO NOT EVEN **ATTEMPT** SPEECH --BUT SUFFER **QUIETLY** IN A MORE **NOBLE** STYLE.

12432

GERRY CONWAY SCRIPTER | JOHN BUSCEMA, ARTIST | VINNIE COLLETTA INKER | C. JETTER, LETTERER STAN G., COLORIST | ROY THOMAS EDITOR

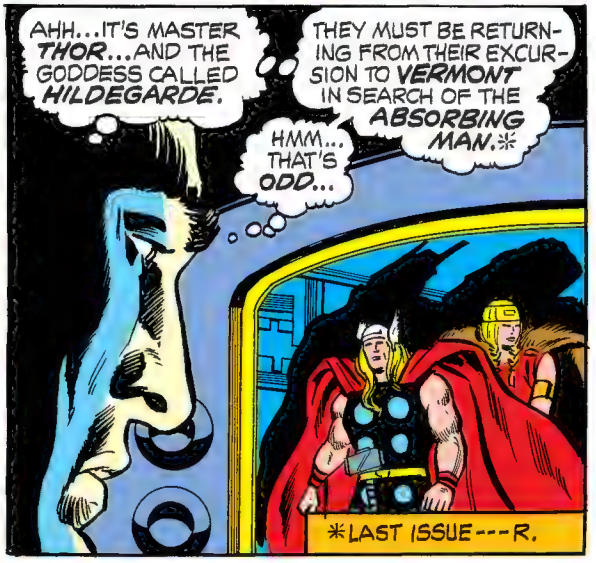

WITHIN MOMENTS, THEY HAVE COVERED THE CONCRETE-COATED LENGTH OF THE ISLAND BOROUGH, AND DROP TO A GENTLE LANDING ON A FAMILIAR EAST SIDE ROOF--
--THE TOWNHOUSE MANSION WHICH HOUSES A WORLD-FAMOUS BAND OF ADVENTURERS CALLED THE AVENGERS--


--OF WHOM THE MOST POWERFUL IS THOR--
THOR, GOD OF THUNDER!
THY THOUGHTS, MILORD?
THE BLACKEST I HAVE EVER KNOWN, HILDEGARDE.
YEAH-AND THE MOST BITTER AS WELL!

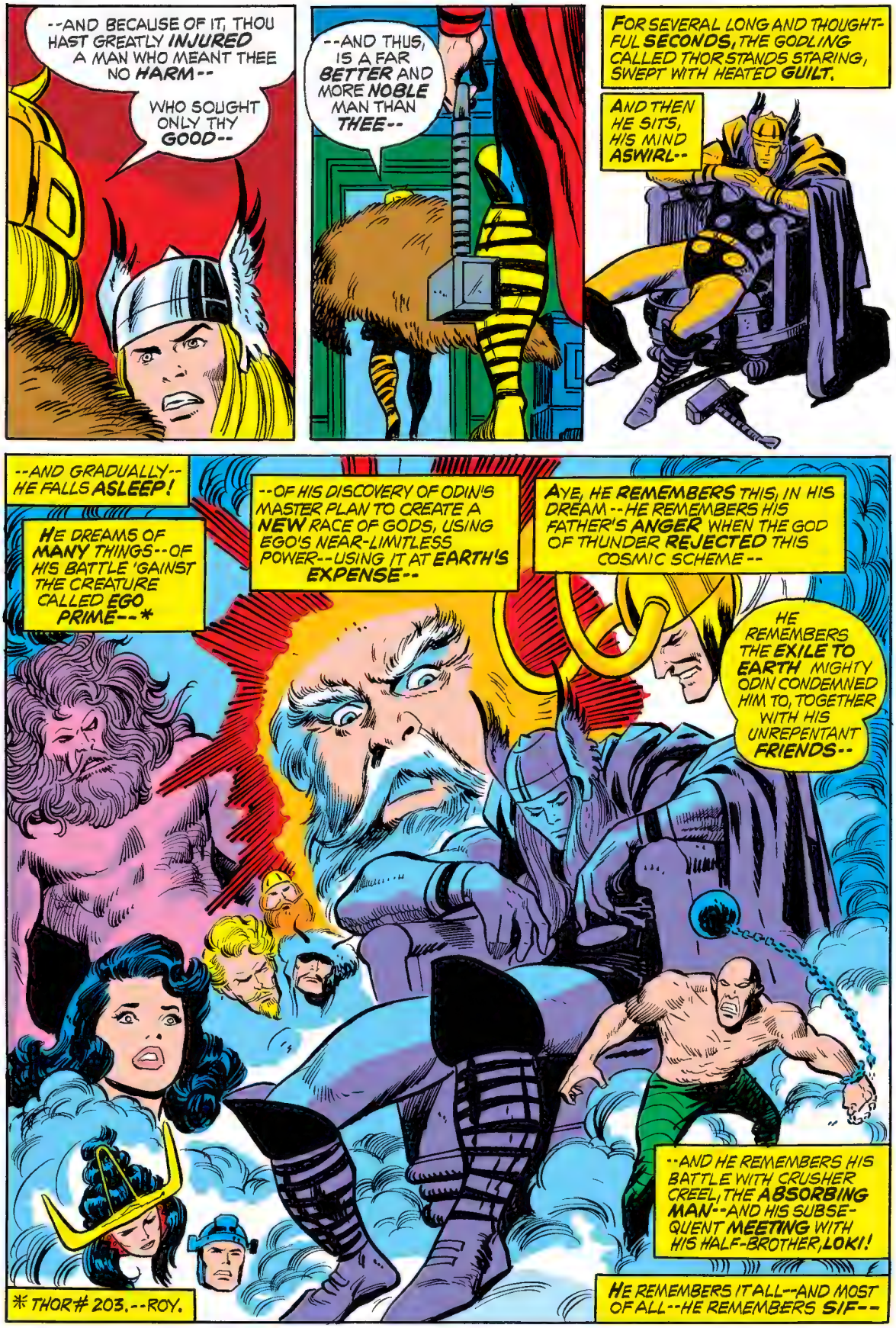

BRMMMM
THE ALARMS! SOMEONE'S ON THE ROOF--
--SOMEONE WHO HASN'T ACTIVATED THE PASSAGE CODE!

IT'S AFTER FOUR A.M.-- THE PERFECT TIME FOR AN UNEXPECTED ASSAULT, I SHOULD THINK!
AND YET--I DON'T THINK SO. THERE ARE NO SOUNDS OF HEAVY MACHINERY --NO TREMORS--!

STILL, I CAN'T IGNORE MY DUTIES. I HAVE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY EMPLOYERS, AFTER ALL.
THE HALL MONITOR WILL TELL ME WHAT I NEED TO KNOW.

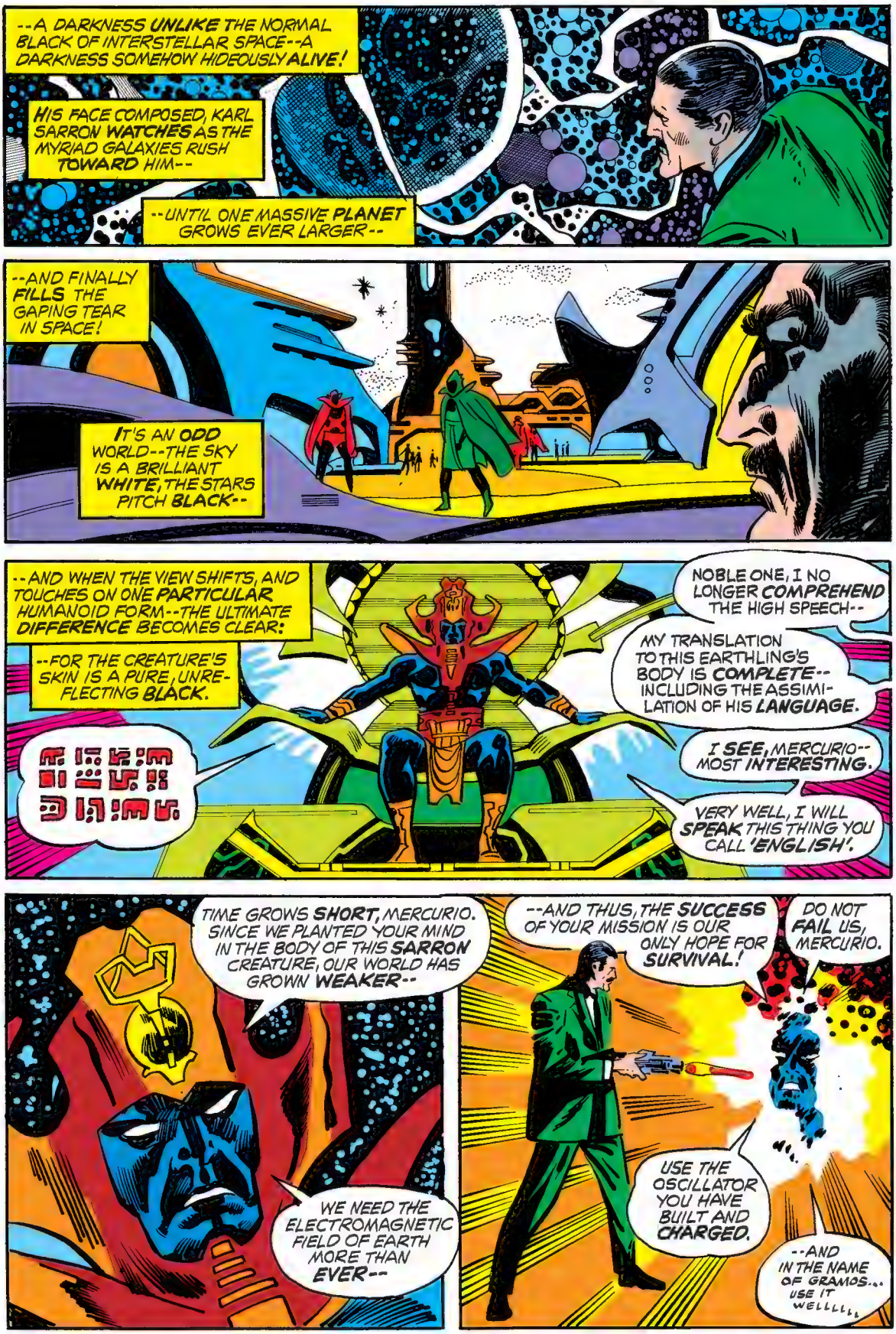

AHH...IT'S MASTER THOR...AND THE GODDESS CALLED HILDEGARDE.
HMM... THAT'S ODD...
THEY MUST BE RETURNING FROM THEIR EXCURSION TO VERMONT IN SEARCH OF THE ABSORBING MAN.*
*LAST ISSUE---R.

THE LADY SIF WAS WITH THEM WHEN THEY LEFT A FEW HOURS AGO--
COULD SHE HAVE REMAINED IN THE TOWN OF RUTLAND--ON SOME PERSONAL MISSION?
AH, WELL--IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO QUESTION--ONLY TO SERVE.
SHORT MOMENTS LATER, THE MAN CALLED JARVIS ENTERS THE TOWNHOUSE SITTING ROOM--
--A SMILE CURVES HIS LIPS--HE BEGINS TO SPEAK, TO OFFER THE ASGARDIANS TEA--
--WHEN SUDDENLY--
I SAY THEE--BE SILENT, MORTAL!
I HAVE NO PATIENCE WITH THINE ENDLESS, MINDLESS PRATTLING!
IF WE DO HAVE NEED OF THEE, WE SHALL SUMMON THEE--
--BUT UNTIL THAT TIME DOTH COME--BEGONE!
YES, SIR--OF COURSE!
I'M SORRY--SORRY TO HAVE DISTURBED YOU--
--SO VERY SORRY, SIR!
WAIT, MILORD--I WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH THEE!
'TIS NO GREATLY NOBLE THING TO SUFFER--'TIS KNOWN TO GOD AND MAN, TO RICH AND POOR ALIKE.
THOU THINKEST THYSELF A SPECIAL CASE--A PRIVATE CASE--

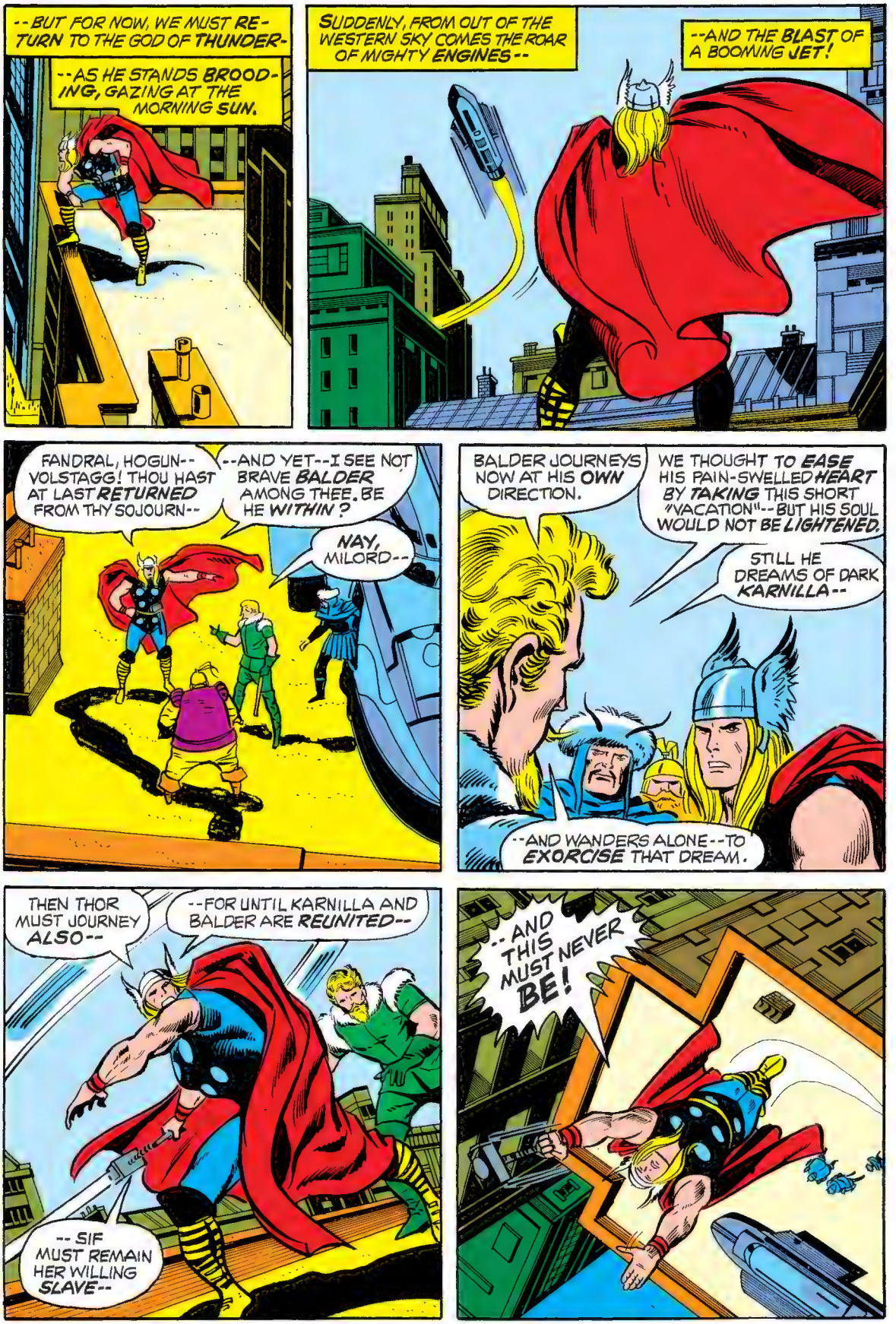

--AND BECAUSE OF IT, THOU HAST GREATLY INJURED A MAN WHO MEANT THEE NO HARM--
WHO SOUGHT ONLY THY GOOD--
--AND THUS, IS A FAR BETTER AND MORE NOBLE MAN THAN THEE--
FOR SEVERAL LONG AND THOUGHTFUL SECONDS, THE GODLING CALLED THOR STANDS STARING, SWEPT WITH HEATED GUILT.
AND THEN HE SITS, HIS MIND ASWIRL--
--AND GRADUALLY-- HE FALLS ASLEEP!
HE DREAMS OF MANY THINGS--OF HIS BATTLE 'GAINST THE CREATURE CALLED EGO PRIME--*
--OF HIS DISCOVERY OF ODIN'S MASTER PLAN TO CREATE A NEW RACE OF GODS, USING EGO'S NEAR-LIMITLESS POWER--USING IT AT EARTH'S EXPENSE--
AYE, HE REMEMBERS THIS, IN HIS DREAM--HE REMEMBERS HIS FATHER'S ANGER WHEN THE GOD OF THUNDER REJECTED THIS COSMIC SCHEME--
HE REMEMBERS THE EXILE TO EARTH MIGHTY ODIN CONDEMNED HIM TO, TOGETHER WITH HIS UNREPENTANT FRIENDS--
--AND HE REMEMBERS HIS BATTLE WITH CRUSHER CREEL, THE ABSORBING MAN--AND HIS SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH HIS HALF-BROTHER, LOKI!
HE REMEMBERS IT ALL--AND MOST OF ALL--HE REMEMBERS SIF--
* THOR # 203.--ROY.

--SIF, WHO TRADED THOR'S LIFE FOR HER ALLIGENCE TO KARNILLA, THE NORN QUEEN--
--SIF, WHO BEGGED KARNILLA TO AID THE THUNDER GOD IN HIS STRUGGLE 'GAINST LOKI--
--SIF, HIS BELOVED--WHO ABANDONED HIM--WHO--
--AND SUDDENLY --HE WAKES.
I SEE NOW HOW I DID BLAME MYSELF FOR MILADY'S DIRE DECISION--
KNOWING 'TWAS I WHO HAD FAILED HER--BY PROVING TOO WEAK TO WIN 'GAINST LOKI ALONE.
IN MY ANGER--AND YEA, MY GUILT-- I DID WALLOW IN SELF-PITY--
--AND AT LAST, I TRULY KNOW WHAT I MUST DO.
OH--MASTER THOR!
I HOPE I HAVEN'T WAKENED YOU, SIR-- I WAS MERELY SETTING BREAKFAST--
FEAR NOT, MY FRIEND--I HAVE NOT COME TO REPRIMAND THEE--
MILK
--BUT RATHER, TO BEG THY FORGIVENESS.
I HAD NO RIGHT TO ACT AS I DID. 'TWAS A MADNESS --BUT 'TIS OVER, NOW.
THINK NOTHING OF IT, SIR--
--I'M SURE I'VE QUITE FORGOTTEN!

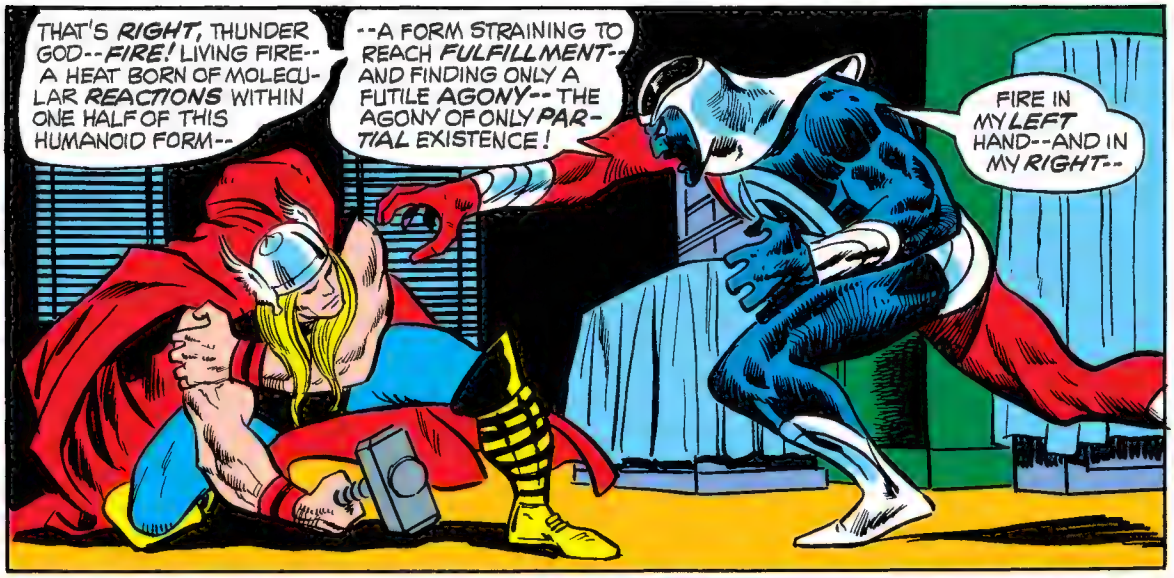
A FEW HOURS LATER, AS THE EARLY MOMENTS OF RUSH HOUR REACH THEIR CONGESTED PEAK, ONE MAN CHOOSES WALKING OVER THE MORE POPULAR FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION--
'MORNING, MR. SARRON.
GOOD MORNING, LOUIS. I'M GOING UP TO DOCTOR BLAKE'S OFFICE--
PLEASE, SEE TO IT I'M NOT DISTURBED.
YOU'RE THE BOSS, MR. SARRON.
QUITE TRUE, YOU ABYSMAL INCOMPETENT.
...I AM INDEED "THE BOSS"...
DONALD BLAKE M.D.
...AND SOON...VERY SOON...I SHALL BE MORE THAN THE MERE OWNER OF THIS OVER-PRICED OFFICE BUILDING....
...I SHALL BE OWNER OF THIS PATHETIC PLANET, AS WELL!
AHH... BLAKE'S PRIVATE OFFICE. THE EMANATIONS SHOULD BE VERY STRONG HERE...
PRIVATE
...MORE THAN STRONG ENOUGH FOR THE NEEDS OF THIS DIMENSIONAL OSCILLATOR.
ALREADY IT GLOWS... AS THOUGH WITH A LIFE OF ITS OWN...
...WHICH, IN A WAY NO SELF-IMPORTANT EARTHLING COULD EVER HOPE TO UNDERSTAND...IT DOES INDEED POSSESS!
AND THEN, LIKE THE RIND ON AN OVER-RIPE FRUIT, THE VERY FABRIC OF SPACE SEEMS TO PEEL BACK--
--REVEALING A COLD AND PERVADING DARKNESS--

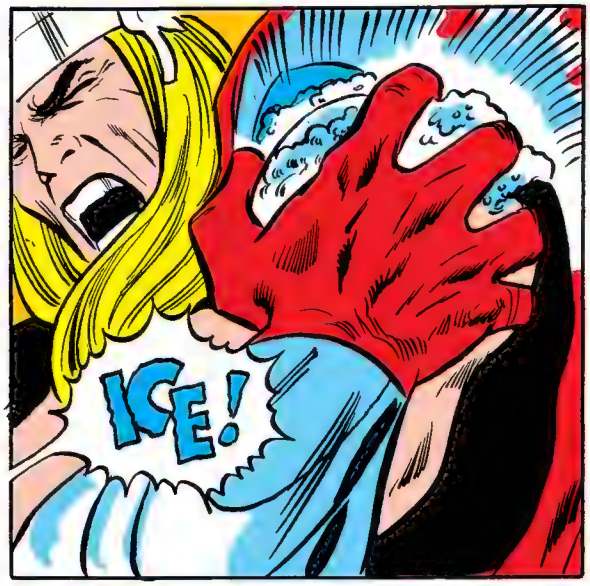

--A DARKNESS UNLIKE THE NORMAL BLACK OF INTERSTELLAR SPACE--A DARKNESS SOMEHOW HIDEOUSLY ALIVE!
HIS FACE COMPOSED, KARL SARRON WATCHES AS THE MYRIAD GALAXIES RUSH TOWARD HIM--
--UNTIL ONE MASSIVE PLANET GROWS EVER LARGER--
--AND FINALLY FILLS THE GAPING TEAR IN SPACE!
IT'S AN ODD WORLD--THE SKY IS A BRILLIANT WHITE, THE STARS PITCH BLACK--
--AND WHEN THE VIEW SHIFTS, AND TOUCHES ON ONE PARTICULAR HUMANOID FORM--THE ULTIMATE DIFFERENCE BECOMES CLEAR:
--FOR THE CREATURE'S SKIN IS A PURE, UNREFLECTING BLACK.
NOBLE ONE, I NO LONGER COMPREHEND THE HIGH SPEECH--
MY TRANSLATION TO THIS EARTHLING'S BODY IS COMPLETE--INCLUDING THE ASSIMILATION OF HIS LANGUAGE.
I SEE, MERCURIO--MOST INTERESTING.
VERY WELL, I WILL SPEAK THIS THING YOU CALL 'ENGLISH'.
TIME GROWS SHORT, MERCURIO. SINCE WE PLANTED YOUR MIND IN THE BODY OF THIS SARRON CREATURE, OUR WORLD HAS GROWN WEAKER--
WE NEED THE ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD OF EARTH MORE THAN EVER--
--AND THUS, THE SUCCESS OF YOUR MISSION IS OUR ONLY HOPE FOR SURVIVAL!
DO NOT FAIL US, MERCURIO.
USE THE OSCILLATOR YOU HAVE BUILT AND CHARGED.
--AND IN THE NAME OF GRAMOS... USE IT WELLLL...

AND SO I SHALL, NOBLE ONE...
IN THE PAST MONTHS, THE OSCILLATOR HAS ABSORBED THE BASIC ENERGIES IN THIS ROOM--
--ENERGIES IMPARTED BY DOCTOR DONALD BLAKE--DURING HIS TRANSFORMATIONS INTO THE GODLING, THOR--
--ENERGIES WHICH SHALL NOW AID MY OWN TRANSFORMATION--
--A TRANSFORMATION WHICH WILL RETURN ME TO MY NATURAL STATE--
--AND MAKE ME--
--ONCE AGAIN--
THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL MAN!
NO!
SOMETHING'S HAPPENED! SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG!
THE POWER'S FADING--THE TRANSFORMATION'S STOPPED!
BUT--IT CANNOT STOP NOW--I'M ONLY PARTIALLY TRANSFORMED!
IT MUST CONTINUE--IT MUST!
BUT NO FURTHER CHANGE OCCURS--AND AFTER SEVERAL INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATING ATTEMPTS--
--THE CREATURE CALLED MERCURIO COMES TO A COLD AND GRIM DECISION.
WE SHALL LEARN OF THAT DECISION IN A MOMENT--


--BUT FOR NOW, WE MUST RE-TURN TO THE GOD OF THUNDER-
--AS HE STANDS BROOD-ING, GAZING AT THE MORNING SUN.
SUDDENLY, FROM OUT OF THE WESTERN SKY COMES THE ROAR OF MIGHTY ENGINES--
--AND THE BLAST OF A BOOMING JET!
FANDRAL, HOGUN--VOLSTAGG! THOU HAST AT LAST RETURNED FROM THY SOJOURN--
--AND YET--I SEE NOT BRAVE BALDER AMONG THEE. BE HE WITHIN?
NAY, MILORD--
BALDER JOURNEYS NOW AT HIS OWN DIRECTION.
WE THOUGHT TO EASE HIS PAIN-SWELLED HEART BY TAKING THIS SHORT "VACATION"--BUT HIS SOUL WOULD NOT BE LIGHTENED.
STILL HE DREAMS OF DARK KARNILLA--
--AND WANDERS ALONE--TO EXORCISE THAT DREAM.
THEN THOR MUST JOURNEY ALSO--
--FOR UNTIL KARNILLA AND BALDER ARE REUNITED--
-- SIF MUST REMAIN HER WILLING SLAVE--
--AND THIS MUST NEVER BE!

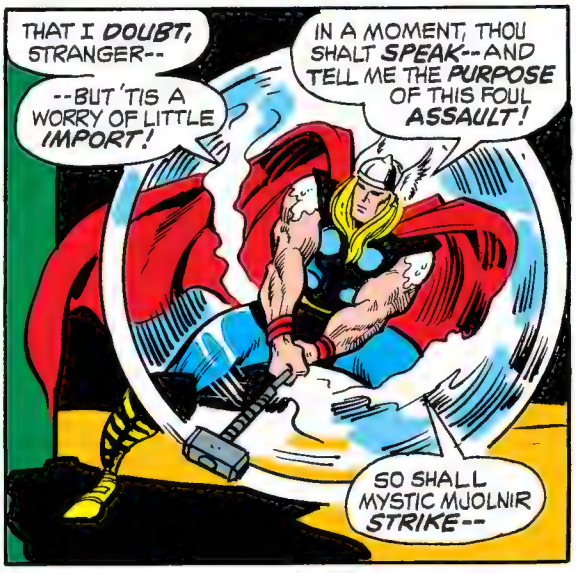
RAPIDLY, HE RISES THROUGH THE SMOG-LADEN SKY--
HE HEADS WEST, ACROSS THE PARK CENTRALLY LOCATED ON THE GRANITE-ROOTED ISLE--
--AND THEN, PASSING A FAMILIAR BUILDING NEAR THE HUDSON SHORE --HE FEELS A SUDDEN CHILL--
--AND DROPS TO A GREY STONE LEDGE.
THE OFFICE OF DOCTOR DONALD BLAKE... MY EARTHLY ALTER EGO...
WHAT BRINGS ME HERE--WHY DO I FEEL THIS SOMBER APPREHENSION --EH ?
A LIGHT--?
BY ODIN'S SILVER MANE! THE FURNITURE DOTH SEEM TO GLOW--
WHAT MANNER OF MADNESS IS THIS?
--TO PULSATE WITH AN ARCANE WARMTH!
HISSSSSSSS
HEAT--BLISTERING, UNBEARABLE HEAT--
AND WHEN THE MOMENT FINALLY PASSES, THE TERROR HAS ONLY BEGUN!
HEIDMAL'S EYES!
MY SHOULDER DOTH SEETHE WITH LIVING FIRE!


THAT'S RIGHT, THUNDER GOD--FIRE! LIVING FIRE--A HEAT BORN OF MOLECULAR REACTIONS WITHIN ONE HALF OF THIS HUMANOID FORM--
--A FORM STRAINING TO REACH FULFILLMENT--AND FINDING ONLY A FUTILE AGONY--THE AGONY OF ONLY PARTIAL EXISTENCE!
FIRE IN MY LEFT HAND--AND IN MY RIGHT--


ICE!

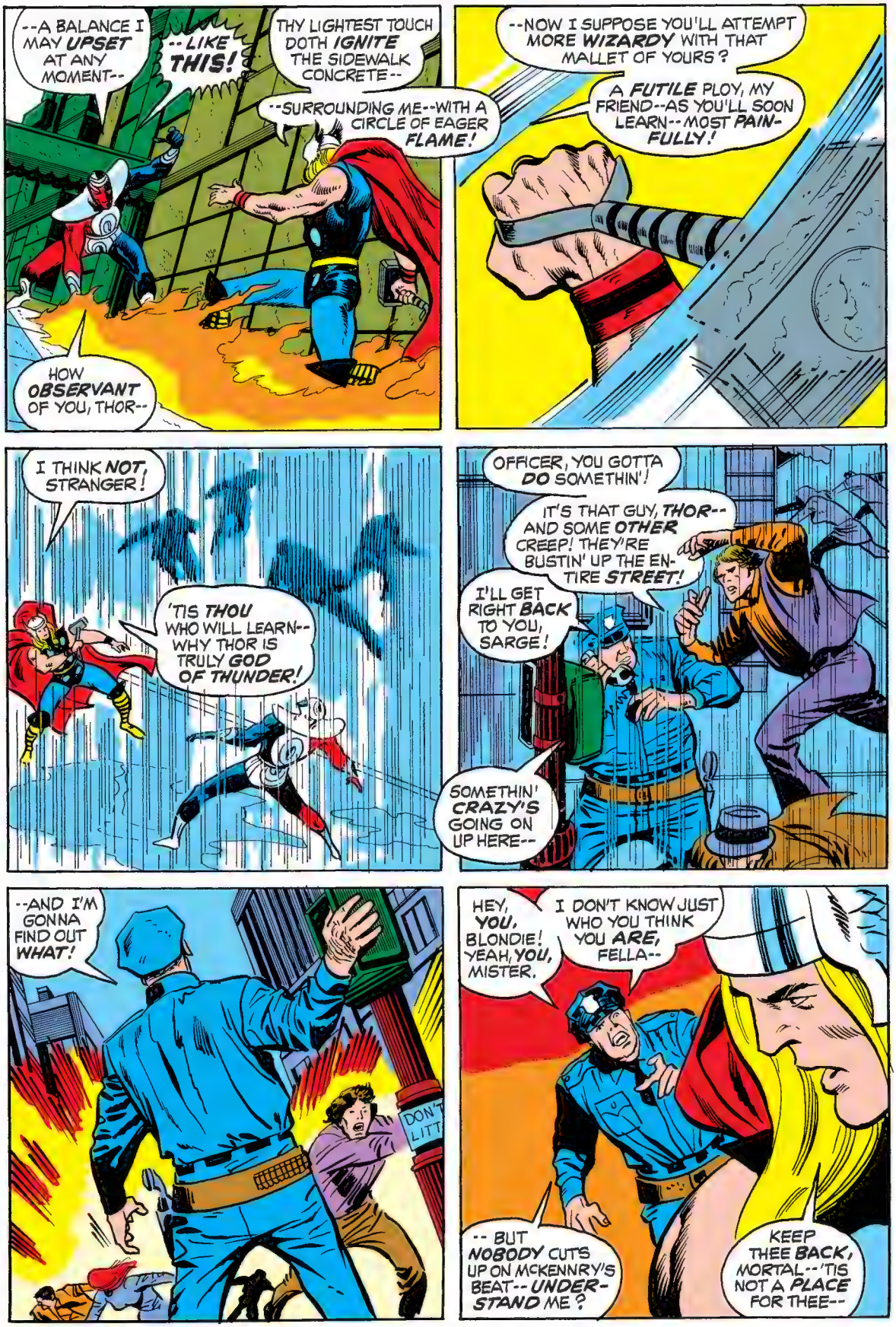
THOU DOST MUTTER STARK INSANITIES--
I KNOW NOT THE MEANING FOR THIS MAD ATTACK..
--NOR DOTH MEANING MATTER--

--FOR ONCE STRUCK--THOR DOTH STRIKE IN TURN!
EXCELLENT!
YOU'LL MAKE MY TASK EASIER, THUNDER GOD--
--EASIER THAN YOU KNOW!


THAT I DOUBT, STRANGER--
--BUT 'TIS A WORRY OF LITTLE IMPORT!
IN A MOMENT, THOU SHALT SPEAK--AND TELL ME THE PURPOSE OF THIS FOUL ASSAULT!
SO SHALL MYSTIC MJOLNIR STRIKE--

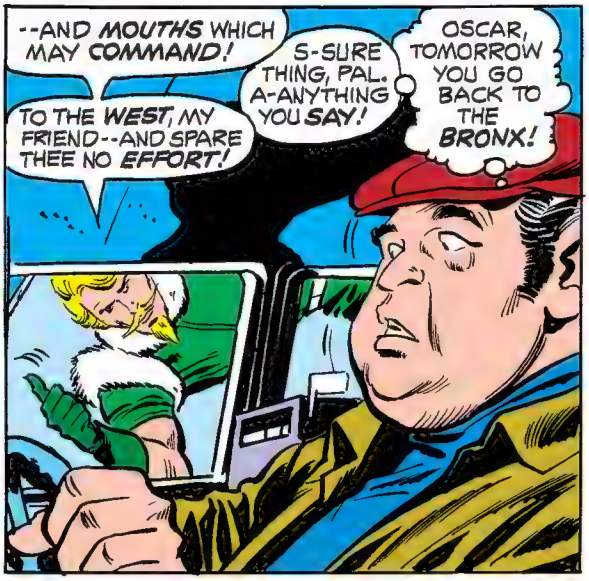
--SO SHALT THOU FALL!
BY THE PEAKS OF HIGH OLYMPUS!
WHOTH
HAND AND HAMMER--FROZEN ALIKE BY SOME SINISTER SORCERY!
NEVER HAVE I FELT SUCH BOUNDLESS POWER!
THEN FEEL SOME MORE, ASGARDIAN--AND KNOW:
HOW CAN THIS BE? THOU DOST SEEK TO CONFUSE ME, STRANGER!
THE POWER YOU FIGHT--IS TRULY YOUR OWN!
NOT TRUE, THOR--BEHIND THE RIDDLE LIES A SIMPLE TRUTH!
ENERGY DRAWN FROM THE THINGS YOU'VE TOUCHED--THAT ENERGY HAS BROUGHT ME TO YOUR WORLD--
--OR RATHER, PARTLY TO YOUR WORLD--
--AND ONLY BY ABSORBING THE FULL POWER IN YOUR GODLING'S FRAME MAY I COMPLETE MY HALTED TRANSFORMATION--
--AND TO DO THAT--
--YOU MUST DIE!

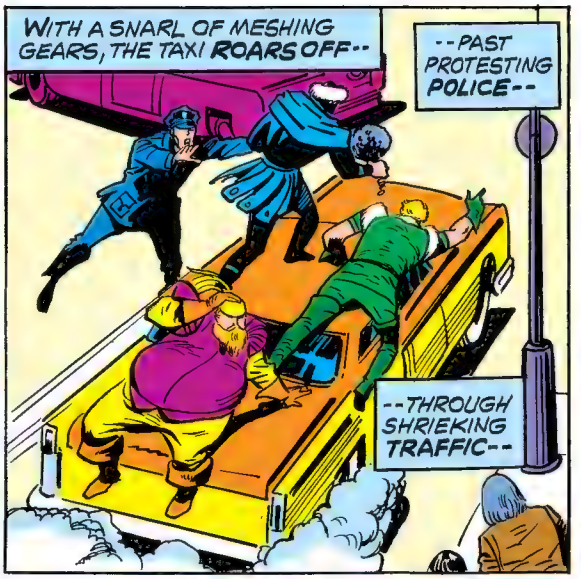
A MOMENT'S PRESSURE--
--THE SQUEAL OF PROTESTING STONE AND STEEL--
--AND EVEN AS THE STARTLED THOR STUMBLES BACK--
--THE OUTSIDE WALL-- CRYSTALIZED!
'TIS MADNESS-- --GROSS MADNESS!
NO, THUNDER GOD-- MERELY A SCIENCE BEYOND YOUR SUPERSTITIOUS MENTALITY!
A SCIENCE OF MAGICIAN'S TRICKS, 'TWOULD SEEM--
BUT THOR DOTH HAVE TRICKS OF HIS OWN!
A MOST INGENIOUS MOVE, ASGARDIAN!
YOUR HAMMER HAS PROPERTIES PREVIOUSLY HIDDEN --OR MERELY UNUSED.
WE EACH HAVE OUR MODES OF TRANSPORTATION: YOU, YOUR HAMMER--
--I, THE THERMAL CURRENTS!
THE POWERS IN CONFLICT WITHIN ME ARE AWESOME, GODLING--
--AND ONLY THEIR DELICATE BALANCE HOLDS THEM IN CHECK--

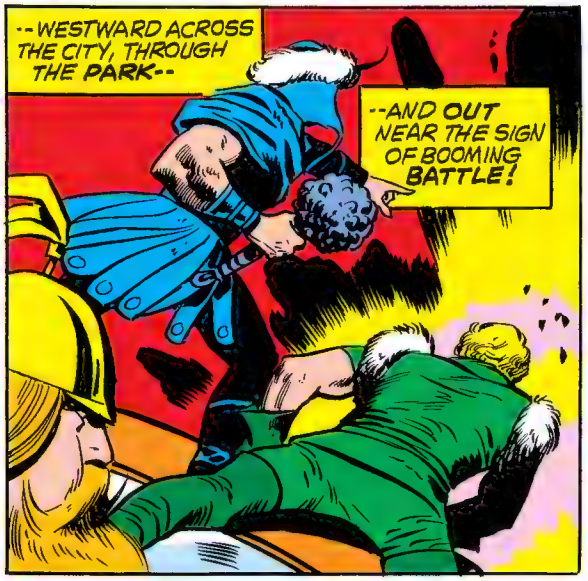

--A BALANCE I MAY UPSET AT ANY MOMENT--
--LIKE THIS!
THY LIGHTEST TOUCH DOTH IGNITE THE SIDEWALK CONCRETE--
--SURROUNDING ME--WITH A CIRCLE OF EAGER FLAME!
HOW OBSERVANT OF YOU, THOR--
--NOW I SUPPOSE YOU'LL ATTEMPT MORE WIZARDY WITH THAT MALLET OF YOURS?
A FUTILE PLOY, MY FRIEND--AS YOU'LL SOON LEARN--MOST PAIN-FULLY!
I THINK NOT, STRANGER!
'TIS THOU WHO WILL LEARN--WHY THOR IS TRULY GOD OF THUNDER!
OFFICER, YOU GOTTA DO SOMETHIN'!
IT'S THAT GUY, THOR--AND SOME OTHER CREEP! THEY'RE BUSTIN' UP THE EN-TIRE STREET!
I'LL GET RIGHT BACK TO YOU, SARGE!
SOMETHIN' CRAZY'S GOING ON UP HERE--
--AND I'M GONNA FIND OUT WHAT!
HEY, YOU, BLONDIE! YEAH, YOU, MISTER.
I DON'T KNOW JUST WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE, FELLA--
-- BUT NOBODY CUTS UP ON MCKENNRY'S BEAT-- UNDER-STAND ME?
KEEP THEE BACK, MORTAL--'TIS NOT A PLACE FOR THEE--

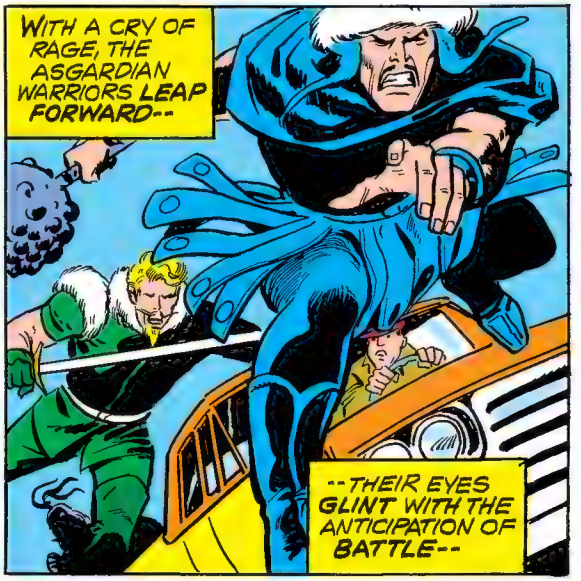
"NOT A PLACE FOR--"? LOOK, BUSTER--I MAY BE NEW TO THIS BURG, BUT ONE THING I DO KNOW--
--NOT YOU OR SOME CLOWN IN A HALLOWEEN COSTUME. I'M TAKIN' BOTH OF YOU IN, NOW.
NO ONE TALKS THAT WAY TO A COP--
ON THE CONTRARY, MY FRIEND.
HEY, WHAT--?
CHINK!
YOU'RE REMAINING WHERE YOU ARE--AS YOU ARE--COURTESY OF THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL MAN!
DEMON! WHAT HAST THOU DONE WITH HIM?
I MERELY USED HIM AS A MODEL, THUNDER GOD!
NOR ARE YOU MEANT TO.
...A MODEL? I LIKE NOT THE SOUND OF IT!
I SAID YOU COULDN'T DEFEAT ME, ASGARDIAN --AND I SINCERELY MEANT THAT.
UNLESS YOU SURRENDER YOURSELF TO ME IMMEDIATELY--I WILL FREEZE EVERY LIVING CREATURE IN THIS CITY--
--AND YOU CANNOT STOP ME--
NO ONE CAN!
ELSEWHERE--AND ELSEWHEN--TWENTY MINUTES BEFORE, THREE MEN MOVE THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF THE AVENGER'S TOWN-HOUSE, UNTIL--
HO, VISION! BY THY COUNTENANCE, THOU DOST NEED CHEERING!
WHAT TROUBLES THEE, FRIEND?
NOTHING, FANDRAL...YOU SEE BOREDOM, NOT GRIEF.
BOREDOM? AHH...VERILY, I UNDERSTAND.
TELL ME--CAN THIS MACHINE VIEW MORE DISTANT SCENES--
--SUCH AS FAR-OFF ASGARD?
'TIS THY TURN TO STUDY YON MONITOR ...AND THE WORK DOTH HOLD LITTLE INTEREST FOR THEE.
PERHAPS... PERHAPS.

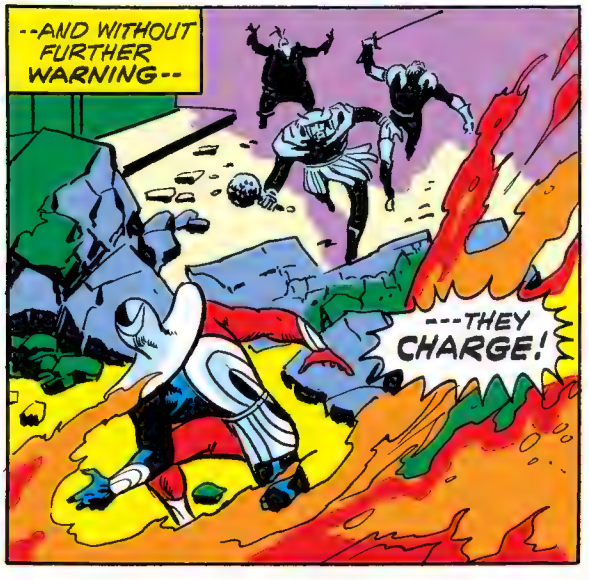
ANDROID FINGERS TOUCH SILVER BUTTONS, TWIST GOLDEN DIALS...
--A PULSING, INVISIBLE BEAM REACHES SKYWARD, TO A SPINNING, ORBITAL SATELLITE...
...WHICH EXTENDS, IN TURN, ITS OWN QUESTIONING BEAM...
...TO THE DISTANT LAND KNOWN BY SOME....AS THE ETERNAL REALM.
'TIS A FINE DEVICE.
...A FINE DEVICE... INDEED.
YEA!
FOR ONE MOMENT MORE, THE GODLING CALLED FANDRAL STARES AT THE IMAGE ON THE SCREEN... AND THEN HIS HEAD BOWS, HIS EYES CLOSE...
...AND A GLOVED HAND MOVES TO CHANGE THE PAINFUL SCENE...
MY APOLOGIES, FRIEND... I HAD NO IDEA THE VIEW WOULD SO AFFECT YOU.
BUT WAIT--IT SEEMS YOUR FRIEND THOR HAS DIFFICULTIES OF HIS OWN--!
ENOUGH OF THIS SELF-PITY--- WE SEE OUR DUTY CLEAR BEFORE US, FANDRAL!
YEAH--A DUTY PLAIN-- AND MORE--
A DUTY PLEASANT!
--AS ARE ALL WHICH CLAIM THE WORK--OF A MOVING SWORD!
HO! YONDER CAB SHALL PROVE PROVIDENT!
IF ITS DRIVER DOTH STOP--!
WHAT, AND SLOW ITS GAINED MOMENTUM?
'TIS NEEDLESS WHEN WE'VE LEGS TO LEAP WITH--

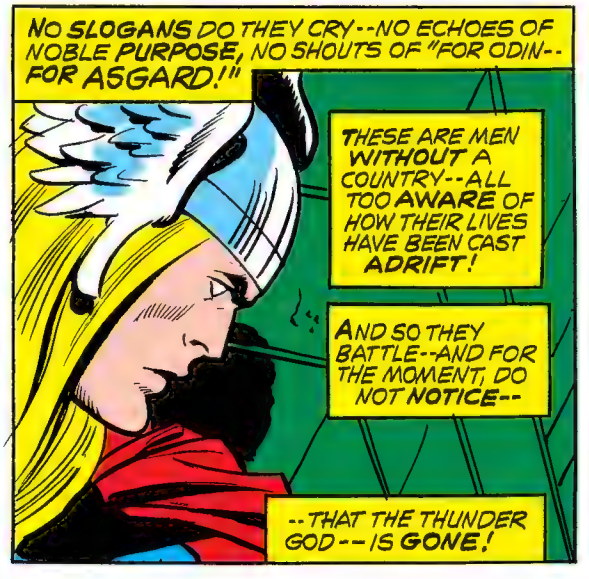

--AND MOUTHS WHICH MAY COMMAND!
TO THE WEST, MY FRIEND--AND SPARE THEE NO EFFORT!
S-SURE THING, PAL. A-ANYTHING YOU SAY!
OSCAR, TOMORROW YOU GO BACK TO THE BRONX!


WITH A SNARL OF MESHING GEARS, THE TAXI ROARS OFF--
--PAST PROTESTING POLICE--
--THROUGH SHRIEKING TRAFFIC--


--WESTWARD ACROSS THE CITY, THROUGH THE PARK--
--AND OUT NEAR THE SIGN OF BOOMING BATTLE!

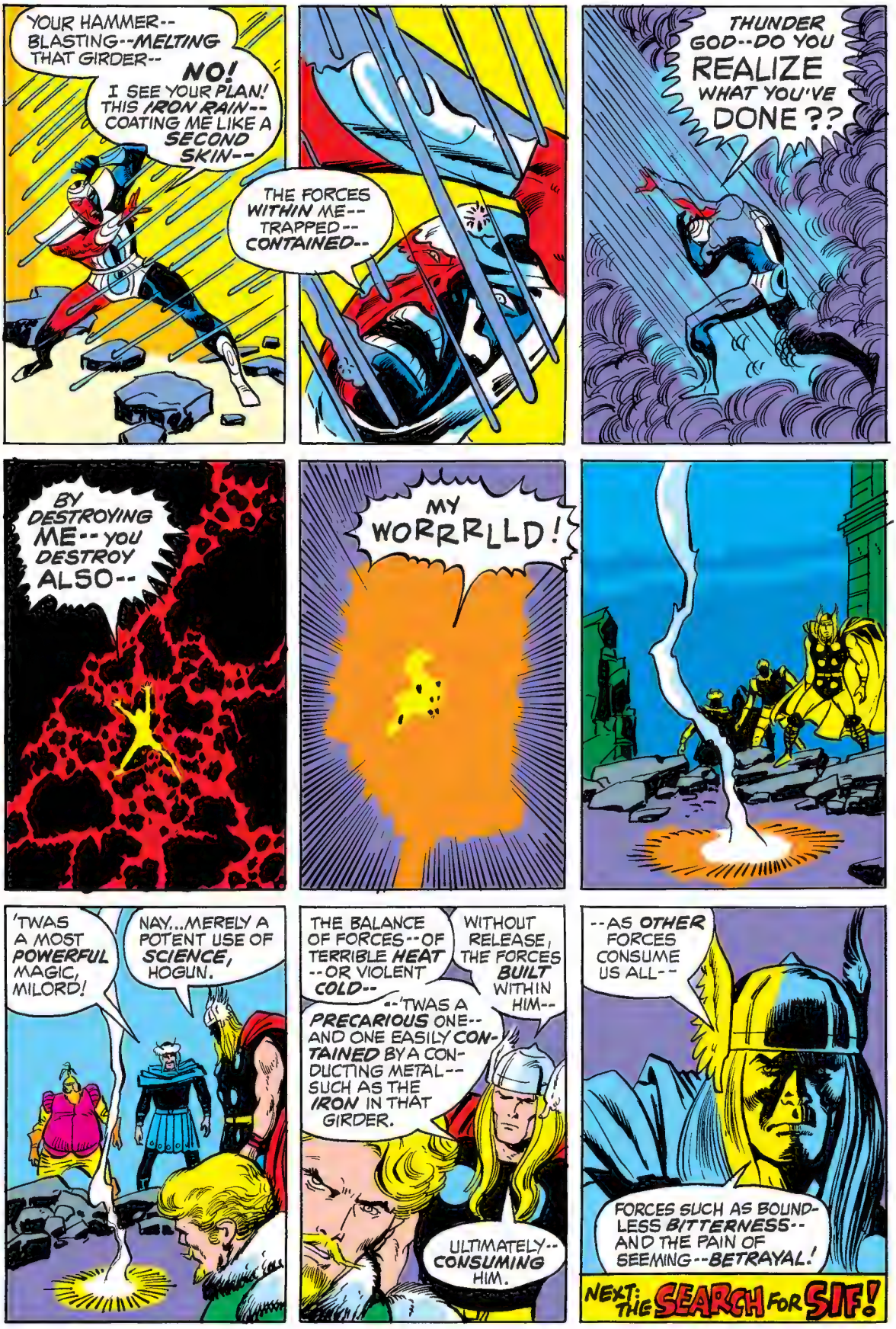

WITH A CRY OF RAGE, THE ASGARDIAN WARRIORS LEAP FORWARD--
--THEIR EYES GLINT WITH THE ANTICIPATION OF BATTLE--


--AND WITHOUT FURTHER WARNING--
---THEY CHARGE!


NO SLOGANS DO THEY CRY--NO ECHOES OF NOBLE PURPOSE, NO SHOUTS OF "FOR ODIN--FOR ASGARD!"
THESE ARE MEN WITHOUT A COUNTRY--ALL TOO AWARE OF HOW THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN CAST ADRIFT!
AND SO THEY BATTLE--AND FOR THE MOMENT, DO NOT NOTICE--
--THAT THE THUNDER GOD--IS GONE!

NO SOONER HAVE THEY ARRIVED, THAN HE HAS SLIPPED AWAY--
--AS THOUGH HE FELT IT SAFE, NOW THAT OTHERS HAD COME TO BATTLE.
SILENTLY, HE DRIVES UPWARD--
--AND AS SILENTLY LANDS--- SEVEN BLOCKS DOWNTOWN.
THE HAMMER PULLS BACK, PAUSES-- THRUSTS.
--AND THOR IS GOD OF THUNDER NO MORE.
I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
I'VE GOT TO MAKE CERTAIN-- DEAD CERTAIN-- I'M RIGHT
FOR, THOUGH THOR KNOWS THE EXTENT OF HEAVEN AND EARTH--
---AND DOCTOR DONALD BLAKE KNOWS THE PHYSICAL FORM OF MAN--
--WHAT I NEED COULD BE BEYOND BOTH OUR CAPACITIES.
AND IN THAT CASE-- THE THUNDER GOD MAY BE DOOMED!
THE MINUTES PASS QUICKLY-- BECOME THIRTY--AND WHEN FIVE MORE HAVE BEEN SWEPT ASIDE BY THE CURRENT OF THE BATTLE--
HOGUN!

APPARENTLY YOUR FRIEND FOUND MY FIRST TOUCH-- TOO COLD.
PERHAPS MY LEFT HAND CAN REVERSE THE DAMAGE OF THE RIGHT--
--THOUGH I FEAR THE SUDDEN HEAT MIGHT PRODUCE A COMPLETELY UNDESIRABLE EFFECT--
--POSSIBLY EVEN-- DEATH!
MONSTER! YOU'LL CAUSE NO FURTHER AGONY!
YOU DELUDE YOURSELF, FRIEND--
THE BALANCE OF THE FORCES WITHIN ME PROTECTS ME FROM OUTWARD HARM.
BUT NO SUCH BALANCE PROTECTS YOU-- AND THUS, YOU WILL DIE--
--UNLESS THE GOD OF THUNDER RETURNS --AND SUBMITS-- AT ONCE!
THEN, BEFORE FURTHER THREATS CAN BE UTTERED--
--A RED AND BLUE FIGURE APPROACHES BETWEEN STEEL-GRAY TOWERS--
--BEARING A MOST INEXPLICABLE WEAPON!
A CONSTRUCTION GIRDER? WHAT GAME IS THIS, ASGARDIAN?
HAS THE STRAIN OF BATTLE SNAPPED YOUR MIND?
NAY, VILLAIN -- BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME--
MY THOUGHTS ARE CLEAR!


YOUR HAMMER--BLASTING--MELTING THAT GIRDER--
NO! I SEE YOUR PLAN! THIS IRON RAIN--COATING ME LIKE A SECOND SKIN--
THE FORCES WITHIN ME--TRAPPED--CONTAINED--
THUNDER GOD--DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE??
BY DESTROYING ME--YOU DESTROY ALSO--
MY WORRRLLD!
'TWAS A MOST POWERFUL MAGIC, MILORD!
NAY...MERELY A POTENT USE OF SCIENCE, HOGUN.
THE BALANCE OF FORCES--OF TERRIBLE HEAT--OR VIOLENT COLD--
WITHOUT RELEASE, THE FORCES BUILT WITHIN HIM--
--'TWAS A PRECARIOUS ONE--AND ONE EASILY CONTAINED BY A CONDUCTING METAL--SUCH AS THE IRON IN THAT GIRDER.
ULTIMATELY--CONSUMING HIM.
--AS OTHER FORCES CONSUME US ALL--
FORCES SUCH AS BOUNDLESS BITTERNESS--AND THE PAIN OF SEEMING--BETRAYAL!
NEXT: THE SEARCH FOR SIF!

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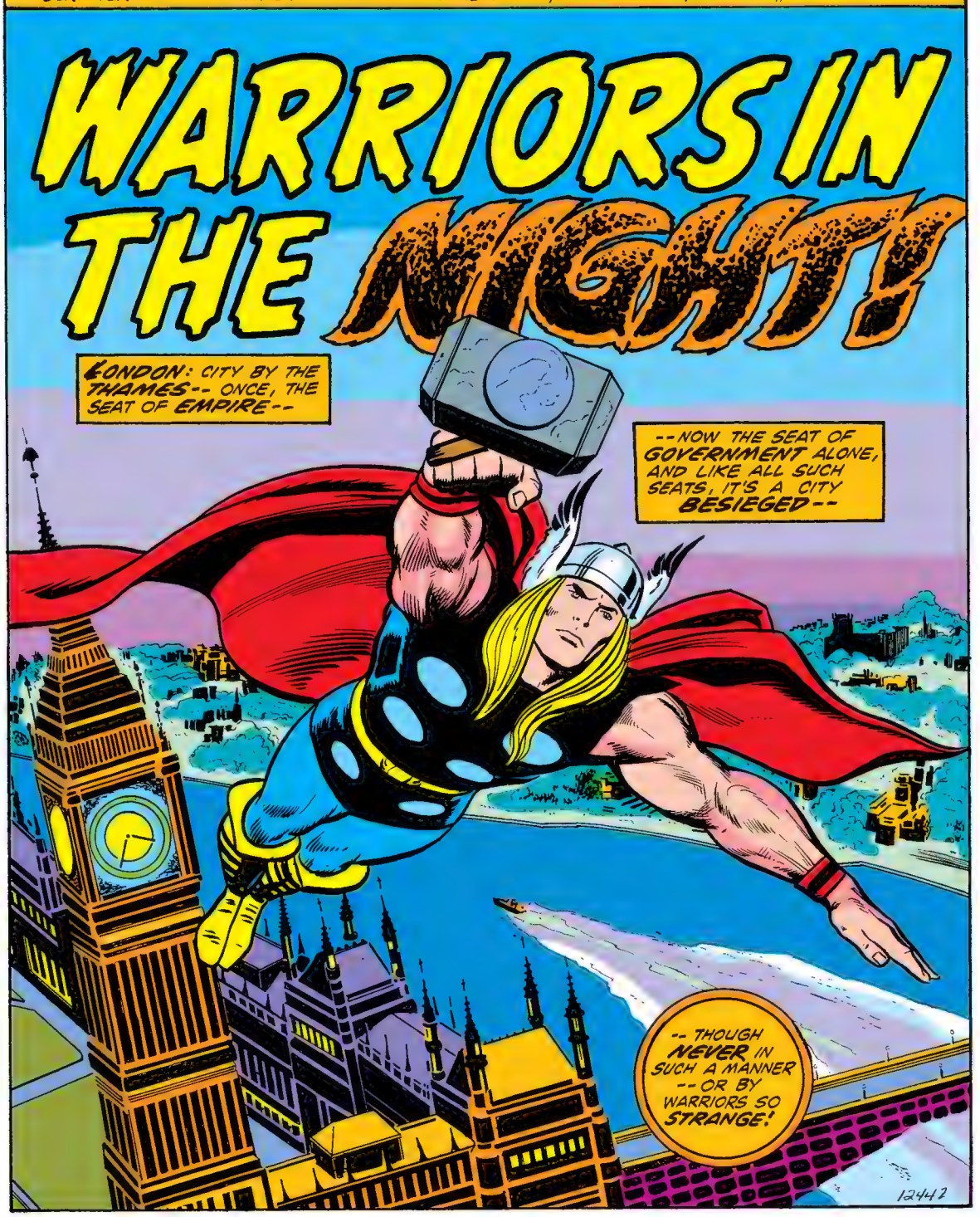
THE MIGHTY
THOR®
KEEP BACK, MATES!
IF THAT BLINKIN' GIANT'S KILLED THOR--THERE'S NOTHING ON EARTH CAN STOP HIM!
THE DAY of the DEADLY DRUID!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

GERRY CONWAY, SCRIPTER // JOHN BUSCEMA, ARTIST // VINNIE COLLETTA, INKER // JOHN COSTANZA, LETTERER // P. GOLDBERG, COLORIST // ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

WARRIORS IN THE NIGHT!


LONDON: CITY BY THE THAMES-- ONCE, THE SEAT OF EMPIRE--
--NOW THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT ALONE, AND LIKE ALL SUCH SEATS, IT'S A CITY BESIEGED--
-- THOUGH NEVER IN SUCH A MANNER -- OR BY WARRIORS SO STRANGE!
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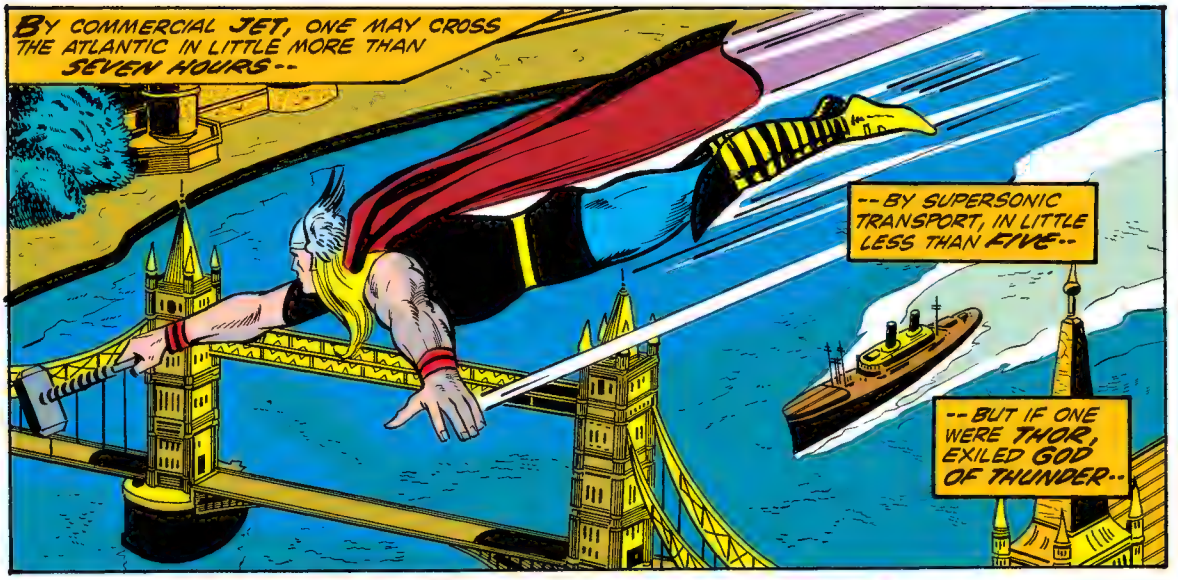
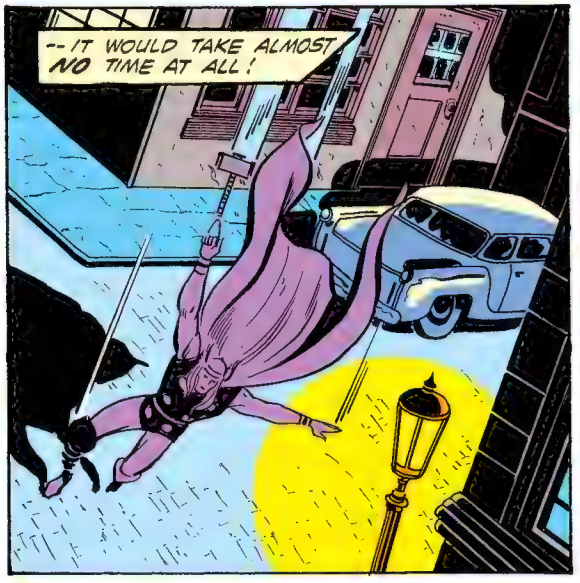
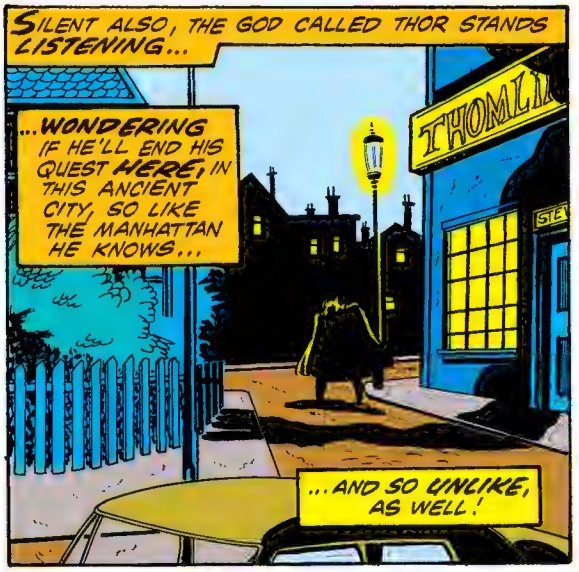
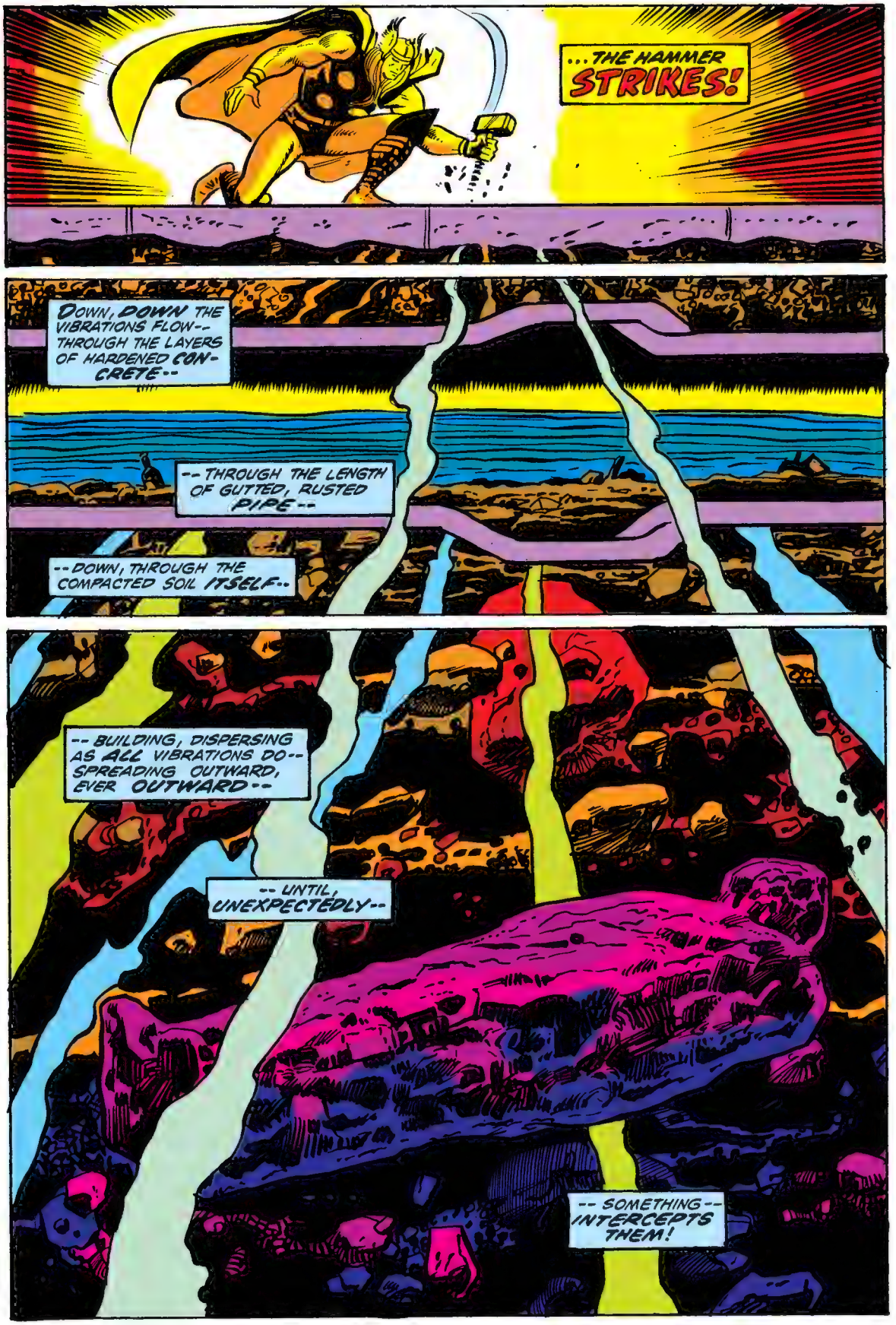

BY COMMERCIAL JET, ONE MAY CROSS THE ATLANTIC IN LITTLE MORE THAN SEVEN HOURS--
--BY SUPERSONIC TRANSPORT, IN LITTLE LESS THAN FIVE--
--BUT IF ONE WERE THOR, EXILED GOD OF THUNDER..


--IT WOULD TAKE ALMOST NO TIME AT ALL!

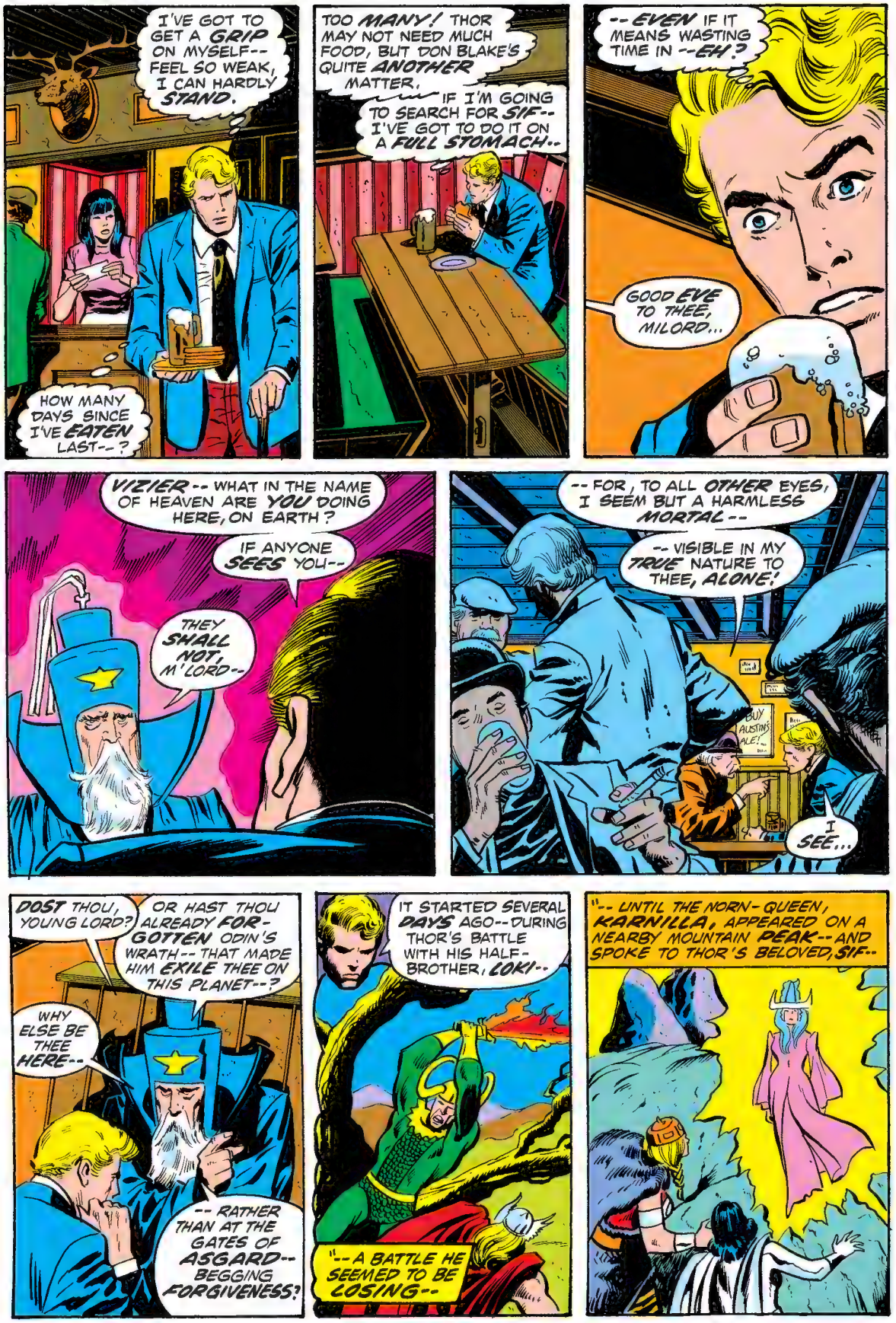
THE CITY IS SILENT, NOW -- SAVE FOR THE DISTANT RUMBLE OF BUSSES, THE FAR-OFF WHISPER OF MOVING CARS.

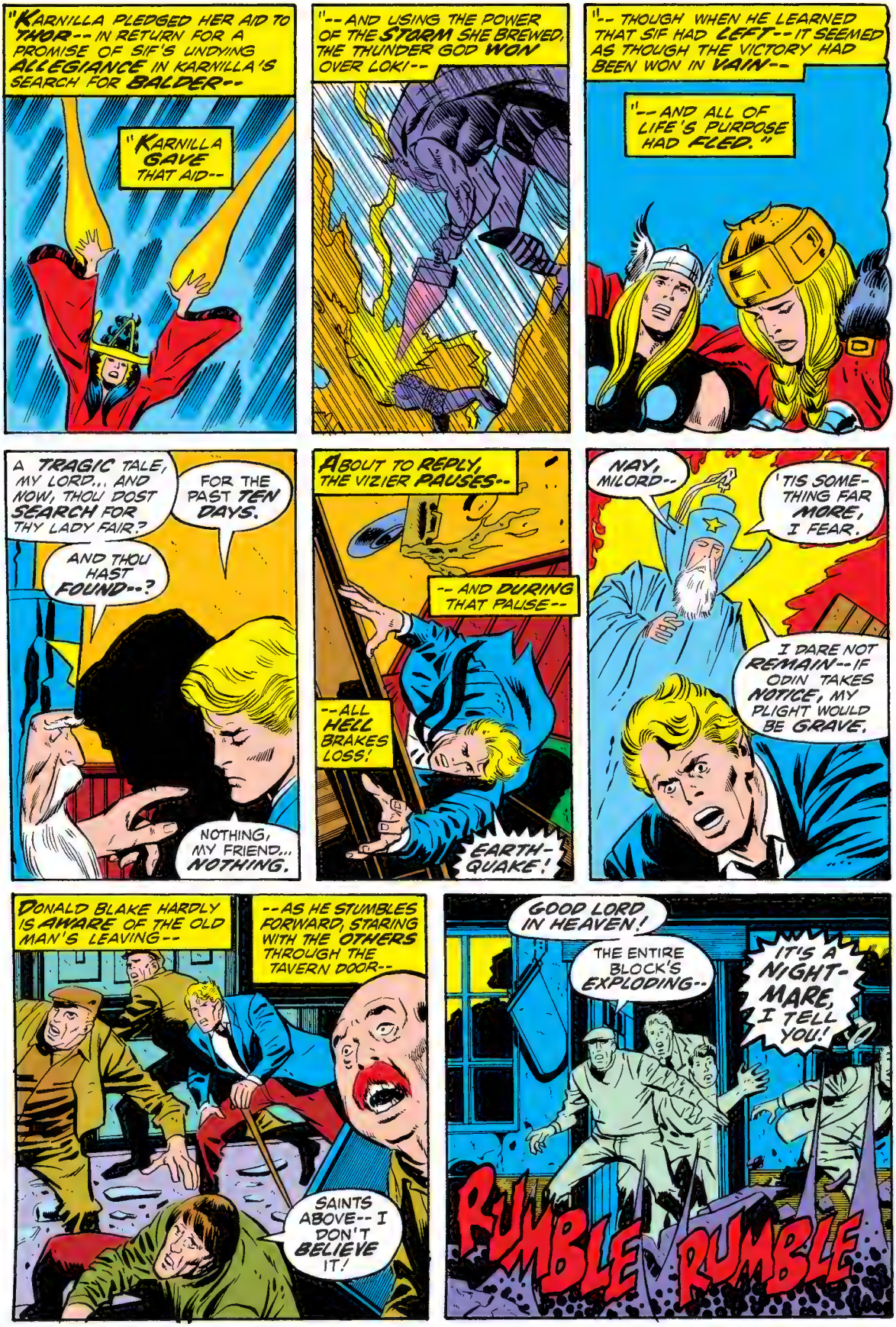

SILENT ALSO, THE GOD CALLED THOR STANDS LISTENING...
...WONDERING IF HE'LL END HIS QUEST HERE, IN THIS ANCIENT CITY, SO LIKE THE MANHATTAN HE KNOWS...
...AND SO UNLIKE, AS WELL!

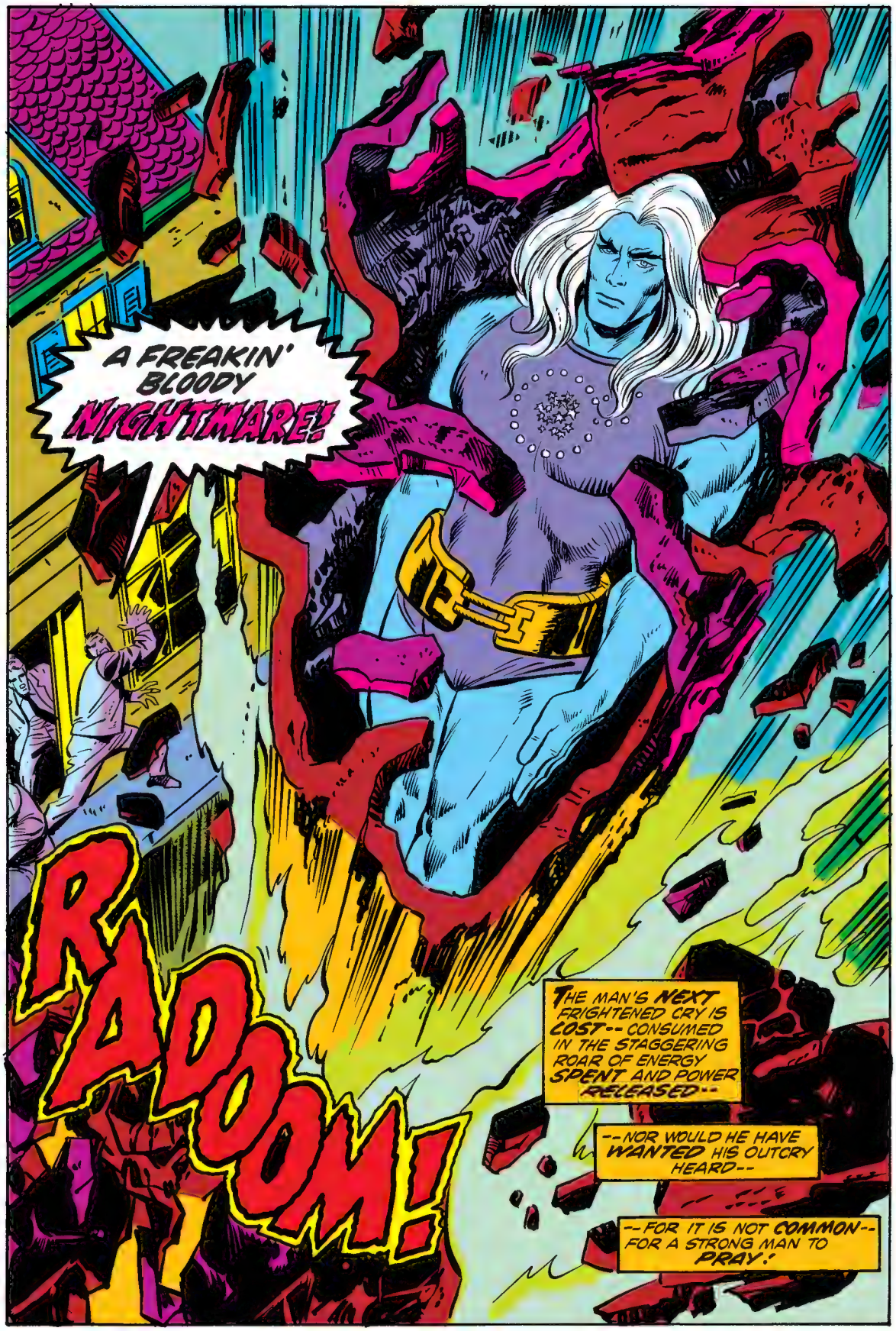
AT LENGTH, HIS MUSING ENDS...
...HIS HAMMER LIFTS, GLINTING IN A STRAY RAY OF MOONLIGHT...
...AND BEFORE ANOTHER BREATH IS DRAWN...

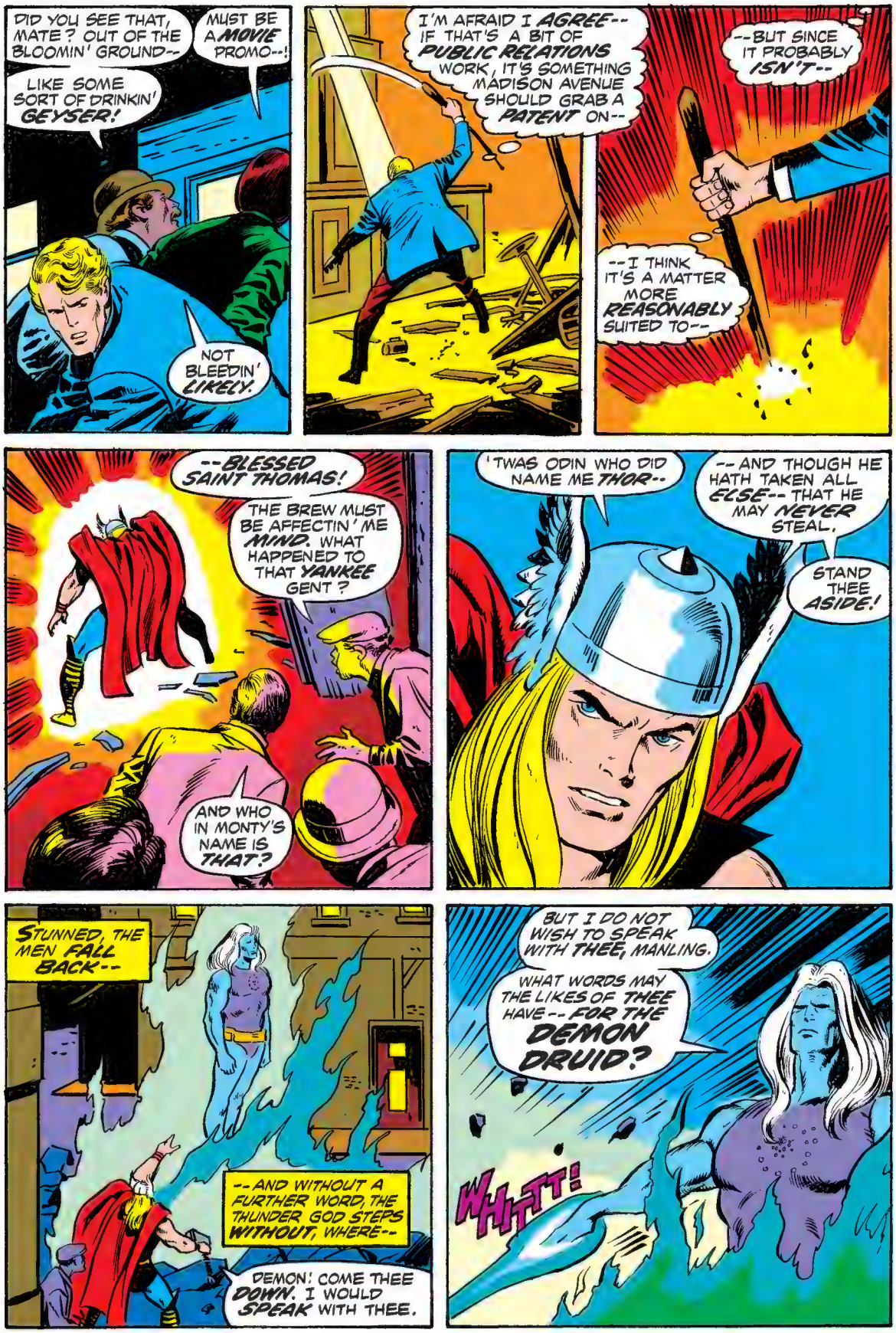

...THE HAMMER STRIKES!
DOWN, DOWN THE VIBRATIONS FLOW-- THROUGH THE LAYERS OF HARDENED CONCRETE--
--THROUGH THE LENGTH OF GUTTED, RUSTED PIPE--
--DOWN, THROUGH THE COMPACTED SOIL ITSELF--
--BUILDING, DISPERSING AS ALL VIBRATIONS DO-- SPREADING OUTWARD, EVER OUTWARD--
--UNTIL, UNEXPECTEDLY--
--SOMETHING-- INTERCEPTS THEM!

STRANGE SIGILS GLOW AS THE VIBRATION JARS THIS MAN-LIKE FORM--
SOFTLY, AN ANSWERING VIBRATION BEGINS, WITHIN THE ALIEN SHELL--
--AND GRADUALLY, THE SLEEPING OBJECT-- WAKES.
YET ON THE SURFACE ABOVE, THE EVENTS BELOW ARE UNKNOWN--
--AS, MIDST A SEETHING BURST OF LIGHT, AN UNCANNY TRANSFORMATION IS COMPLETED--
-- AND THOR IS GOD OF THUNDER NO MORE.
INSTEAD, IT'S DOCTOR DONALD BLAKE WHO LIMPS ACROSS THE DARKENED STREET, TOWARD THE LIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF AN ENGLISH TAVERN--
--IT'S DOCTOR BLAKE WHO CATCHES THE STARING EYES-- THE MUTTERED WHISPERS-- THE HUSHED SPECULATIONS.
CATCH 'IM, WILL YOU? BLOODY AMERICANS ACT LIKE THEY OWN THE WORLD.
SOME BLOODY CHEEK, THEY HAVE.
HERE NOW, DON'T GET ON HIM, SO.
CAN'T YOU SEE 'E'S LAME?
BLOODY CHEEK, I SAY.
WHAT'LL IT BE, GOV'NER? A PINT OR A HALF?
DO YOU HAVE SANDWICHS? PERHAPS A HAM AND CHEESE?
AND A BEER--AH-- A PINT.
RIGHT TO YOU, MATE.


I'VE GOT TO GET A GRIP ON MYSELF-- FEEL SO WEAK, I CAN HARDLY STAND.
HOW MANY DAYS SINCE I'VE EATEN LAST--?
TOO MANY! THOR MAY NOT NEED MUCH FOOD, BUT DON BLAKE'S QUITE ANOTHER MATTER.
IF I'M GOING TO SEARCH FOR SIF-- I'VE GOT TO DO IT ON A FULL STOMACH--
--EVEN IF IT MEANS WASTING TIME IN --EH?
GOOD EVE TO THEE, MILORD...
VIZIER -- WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN ARE YOU DOING HERE, ON EARTH?
IF ANYONE SEES YOU--
THEY SHALL NOT, M'LORD--
-- FOR, TO ALL OTHER EYES, I SEEM BUT A HARMLESS MORTAL --
-- VISIBLE IN MY TRUE NATURE TO THEE, ALONE!
BUY AUSTIN'S ALE!
I SEE...
DOST THOU, YOUNG LORD?
OR HAST THOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN ODIN'S WRATH -- THAT MADE HIM EXILE THEE ON THIS PLANET--?
WHY ELSE BE THEE HERE--
-- RATHER THAN AT THE GATES OF ASGARD-- BEGGING FORGIVENESS?
IT STARTED SEVERAL DAYS AGO -- DURING THOR'S BATTLE WITH HIS HALF-BROTHER, LOKI--
"--A BATTLE HE SEEMED TO BE LOSING--
"-- UNTIL THE NORN-QUEEN, KARNILLA, APPEARED ON A NEARBY MOUNTAIN PEAK -- AND SPOKE TO THOR'S BELOVED, SIF--

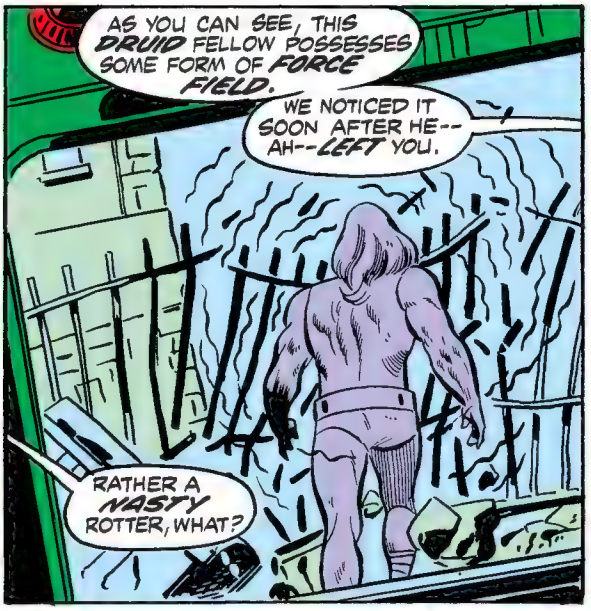

"KARNILLA PLEDGED HER AID TO THOR--IN RETURN FOR A PROMISE OF SIF'S UNDYING ALLEGIANCE IN KARNILLA'S SEARCH FOR BALDER--
"KARNILLA GAVE THAT AID--
"--AND USING THE POWER OF THE STORM SHE BREWED, THE THUNDER GOD WON OVER LOKI--
"--THOUGH WHEN HE LEARNED THAT SIF HAD LEFT--IT SEEMED AS THOUGH THE VICTORY HAD BEEN WON IN VAIN--
"--AND ALL OF LIFE'S PURPOSE HAD FLED."
A TRAGIC TALE, MY LORD... AND NOW, THOU DOST SEARCH FOR THY LADY FAIR?
FOR THE PAST TEN DAYS.
AND THOU HAST FOUND--?
NOTHING, MY FRIEND... NOTHING.
ABOUT TO REPLY, THE VIZIER PAUSES--
-- AND DURING THAT PAUSE--
--ALL HELL BRAKES LOSS!
EARTH-QUAKE!
NAY, MILORD--
'TIS SOMETHING FAR MORE, I FEAR.
I DARE NOT REMAIN--IF ODIN TAKES NOTICE, MY PLIGHT WOULD BE GRAVE.
DONALD BLAKE HARDLY IS AWARE OF THE OLD MAN'S LEAVING--
--AS HE STUMBLES FORWARD, STARING WITH THE OTHERS THROUGH THE TAVERN DOOR--
SAINTS ABOVE-- I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
GOOD LORD IN HEAVEN!
THE ENTIRE BLOCK'S EXPLODING--
IT'S A NIGHT-MARE, I TELL YOU!
RUMBLE RUMBLE

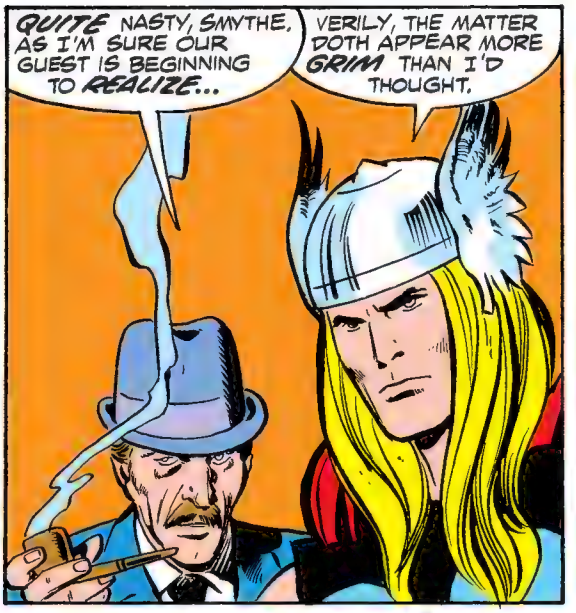

A FREAKIN' BLOODY NIGHTMARE!
KA-BOOM!
THE MAN'S NEXT FRIGHTENED CRY IS LOST-- CONSUMED IN THE STAGGERING ROAR OF ENERGY SPENT AND POWER RELEASED--
--NOR WOULD HE HAVE WANTED HIS OUTCRY HEARD--
--FOR IT IS NOT COMMON-- FOR A STRONG MAN TO PRAY!

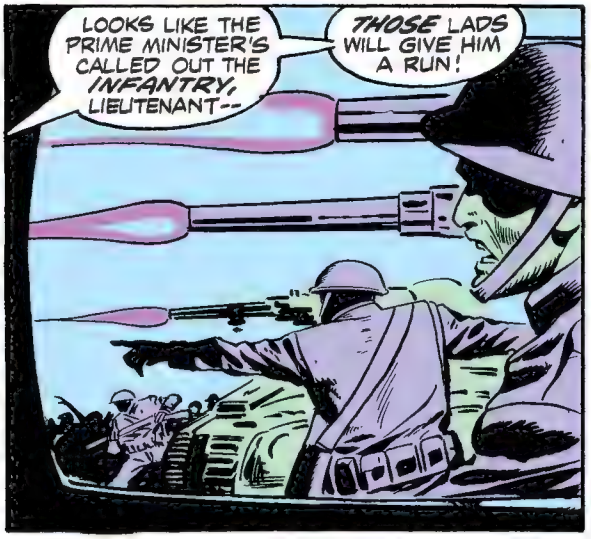

DID YOU SEE THAT, MATE? OUT OF THE BLOOMIN' GROUND--
MUST BE A MOVIE PROMO--!
LIKE SOME SORT OF DRINKIN' GEYSER!
NOT BLEEDIN' LIKELY.
I'M AFRAID I AGREE-- IF THAT'S A BIT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK, IT'S SOMETHING MADISON AVENUE SHOULD GRAB A PATENT ON--
--BUT SINCE IT PROBABLY ISN'T--
--I THINK IT'S A MATTER MORE REASONABLY SUITED TO--
--BLESSED SAINT THOMAS!
THE BREW MUST BE AFFECTIN' ME MIND. WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT YANKEE GENT?
AND WHO IN MONTY'S NAME IS THAT?
'TWAS ODIN WHO DID NAME ME THOR--
--AND THOUGH HE HATH TAKEN ALL ELSE-- THAT HE MAY NEVER STEAL,
STAND THEE ASIDE!
STUNNED, THE MEN FALL BACK--
--AND WITHOUT A FURTHER WORD, THE THUNDER GOD STEPS WITHOUT, WHERE--
DEMON! COME THEE DOWN. I WOULD SPEAK WITH THEE.
BUT I DO NOT WISH TO SPEAK WITH THEE, MANLING.
WHAT WORDS MAY THE LIKES OF THEE HAVE-- FOR THE DEMON DRUID?
WHITT!

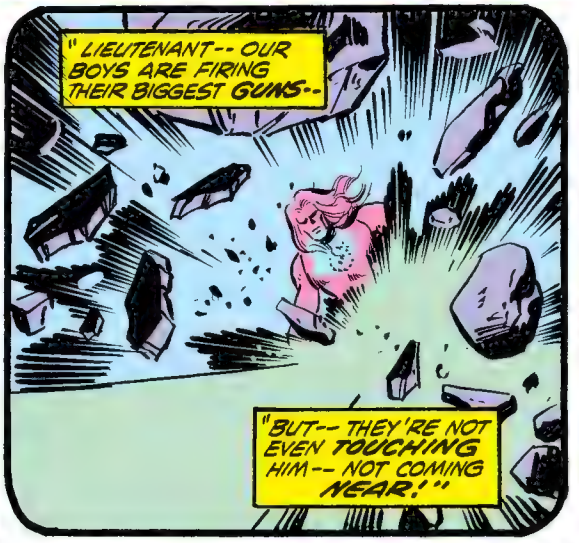
WHUNT!
THRASH!
PING!
HOW MUCH MORE PEACEFUL DOST THOU LOOK IN CALM REPOSE.
YEA--FOR THEE, SLEEP DOES MUCH--
--YET FOR SUCH AS I, SLEEP HAS BEEN BUT A PRISON--
--A CELL FROM WHICH I HAVE AT LAST FOUND SWEET RELEASE.
NOW MUST I RESUME MY LIFE AT THE POINT WHEN 'TWAS MOST BRUTALLY INTERRUPTED--
--DOING WHAT MUST NEEDS BE DONE-- FOR MY MISSON 'PON THIS PLANET EARTH TO BE COMPLETE--
--SO THAT I MAY REST-- AS HE DOTH REST--ONCE MORE.

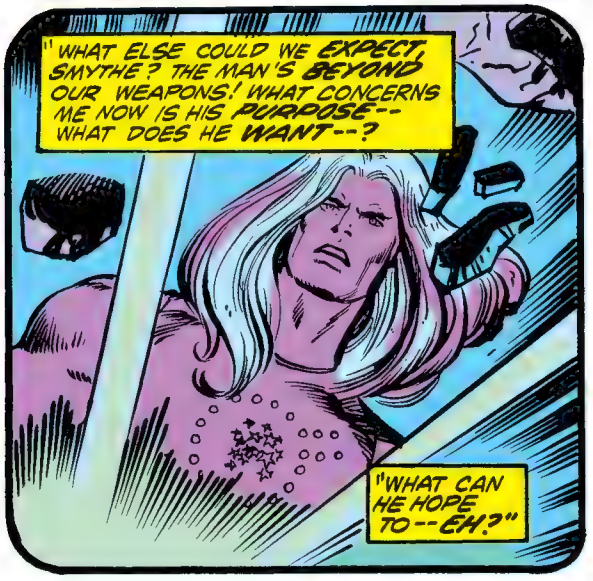
...CAREFUL, LIEUTENANT. SEEMS TO BE COMING AROUND.
I CAN QUITE HANDLE MYSELF, SERGEANT, THANK YOU.
WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR THIS CHAP.
FEELING BETTER, ARE YOU, SIR?
BY ASGARD'S TOWER'S-- MY BRAIN DOTH WHIRL!
WELL IT MIGHT, MY FRIEND. HE KNOCKED YOU QUITE A SMASHER, DIDN'T HE?
HOW LONG HAVE I SLEPT-- WHILST DEMON STALKED FREE?
NOT MORE THAN FIFTEEN MINUTES-- BUT WAIT A MINUTE--
YOU'RE NOT PLANNING TO GO AFTER HIM, ARE YOU?
IF SO-- THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD SEE, BEFORE YOU RUSH OFF--!
LIEUTENANT PRICHARD-- WE SEEM TO HAVE LOCATED HIM, SIR.
HE'S HEADING SOUTHWEST-- PASSING THROUGH LAMBETH!
GOOD SHOW, LAD.
HE'S ONE OF OUR BEST, YOU KNOW.
THANK YOU, SIR. I'LL TRY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH OUR LAMBETH MOBILE TRANSMITTER--
AH-- THERE'S THE BLIGHTER!
I THINK YOU'LL FIND THIS INFORMATIVE, MY FRIEND.


AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS DRUID FELLOW POSSESSES SOME FORM OF FORCE FIELD.
WE NOTICED IT SOON AFTER HE-- AH--LEFT YOU.
RATHER A NASTY ROTTER, WHAT?

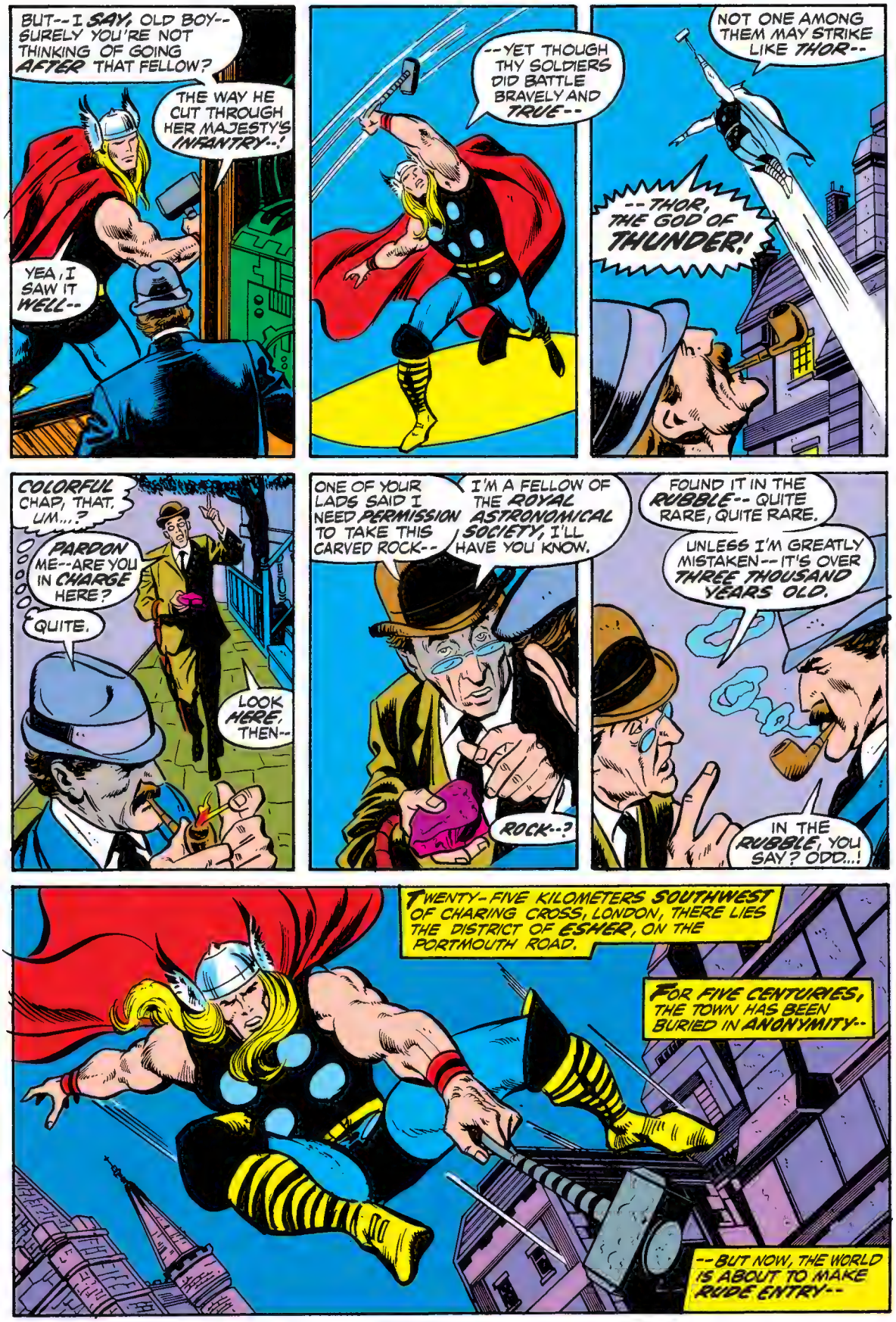

QUITE NASTY, SMYTHE, AS I'M SURE OUR GUEST IS BEGINNING TO REALIZE...
VERILY, THE MATTER DOTH APPEAR MORE GRIM THAN I'D THOUGHT.


LOOKS LIKE THE PRIME MINISTER'S CALLED OUT THE INFANTRY, LIEUTENANT--
THOSE LADS WILL GIVE HIM A RUN!

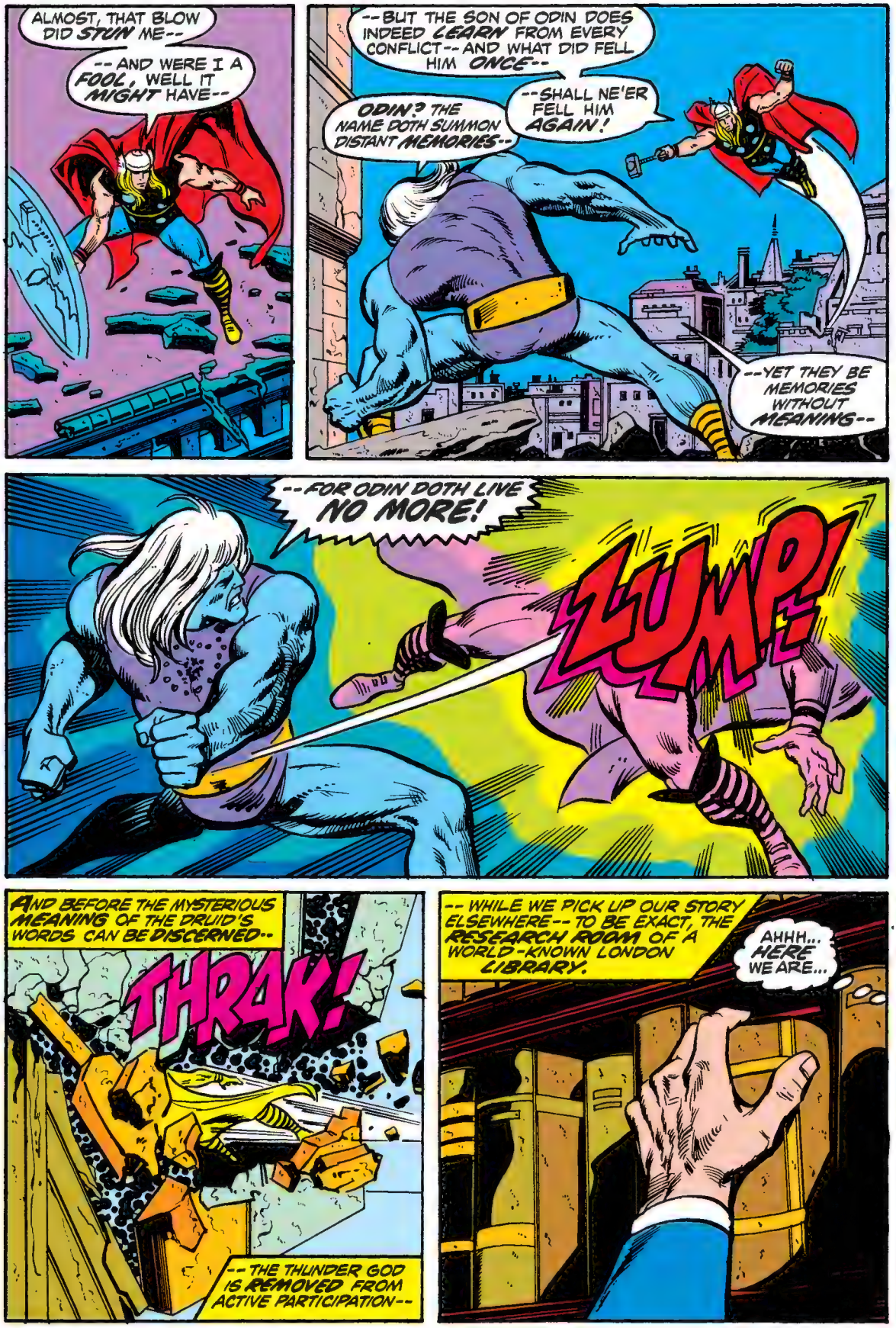

"LIEUTENANT-- OUR BOYS ARE FIRING THEIR BIGGEST GUNS--
"BUT-- THEY'RE NOT EVEN TOUCHING HIM-- NOT COMING NEAR!"

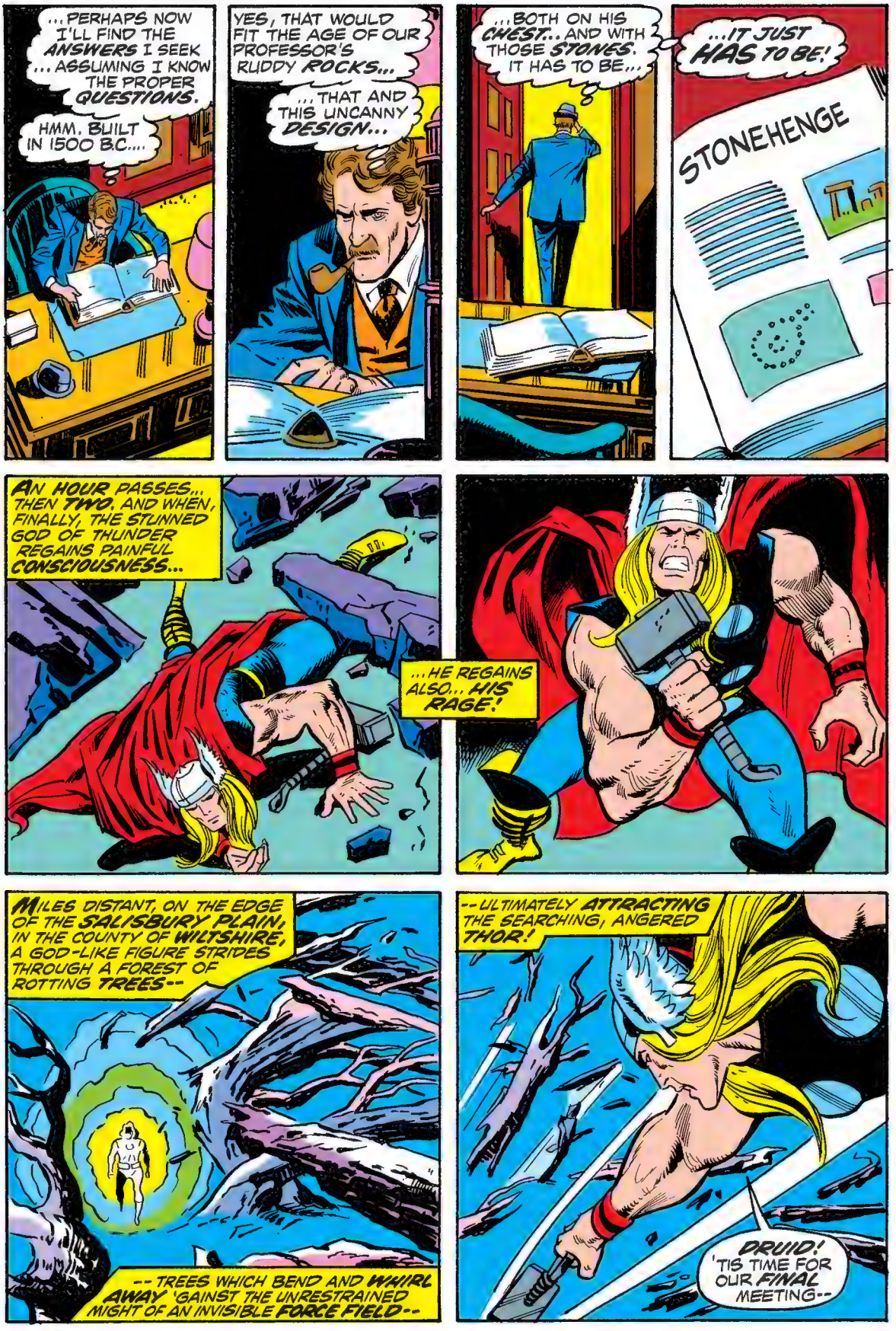

"WHAT ELSE COULD WE EXPECT, SMYTHE? THE MAN'S BEYOND OUR WEAPONS! WHAT CONCERNS ME NOW IS HIS PURPOSE-- WHAT DOES HE WANT--?
"WHAT CAN HE HOPE TO--EH?"

THOU DOST SEEM STUNNED, MORTAL?
WHAT DIDST THOU SEE?
I CAN'T BE SURE-- FOR AN INSTANT, I THOUGHT--
NO! IT COULDN'T BE!

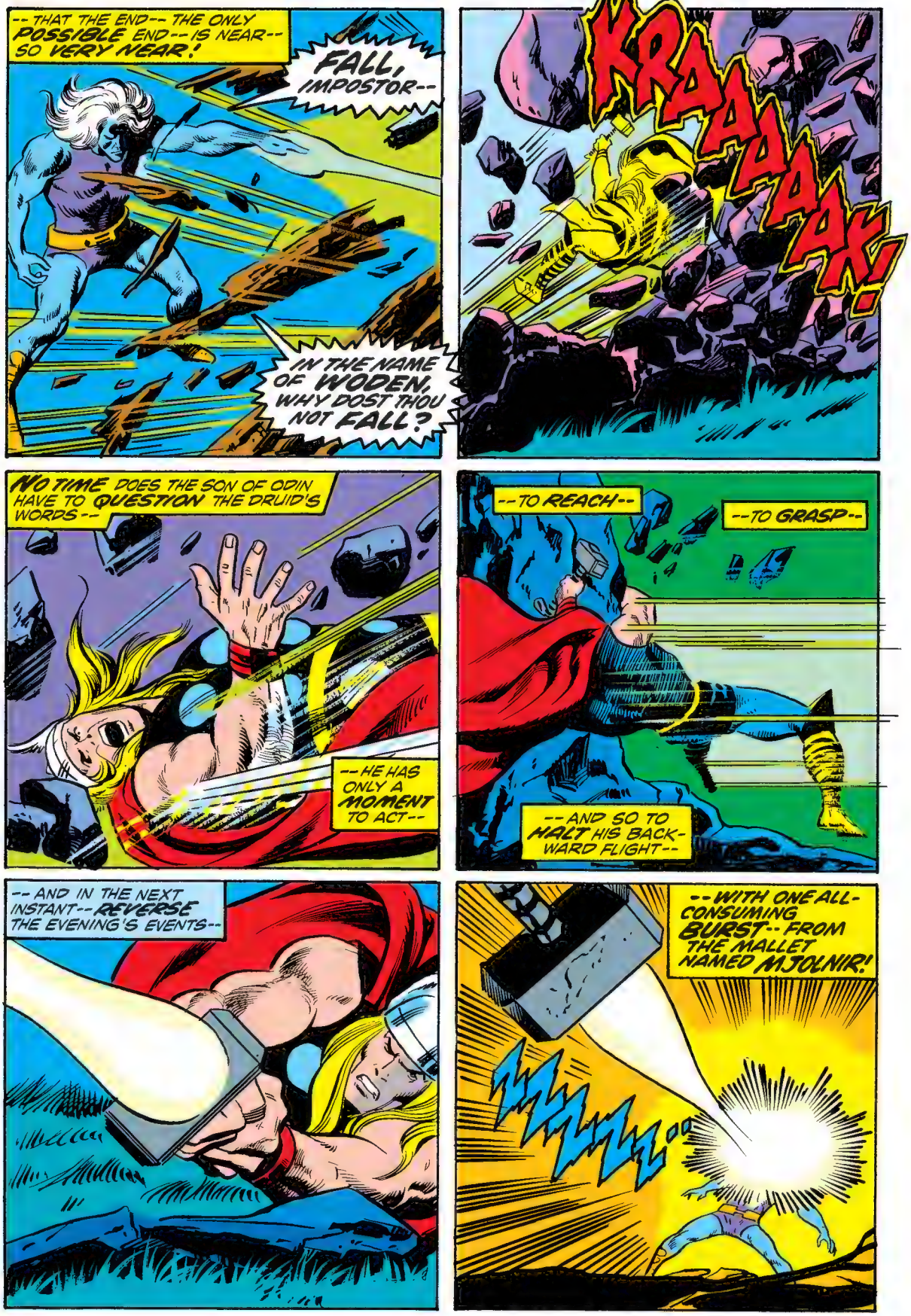

BUT--I SAY, OLD BOY--SURELY YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF GOING AFTER THAT FELLOW?
THE WAY HE CUT THROUGH HER MAJESTY'S INFANTRY--!
YEA, I SAW IT WELL--
--YET THOUGH THY SOLDIERS DID BATTLE BRAVELY AND TRUE--
NOT ONE AMONG THEM MAY STRIKE LIKE THOR--
--THOR, THE GOD OF THUNDER!
COLORFUL CHAP, THAT. UM...?
PARDON ME--ARE YOU IN CHARGE HERE?
QUITE.
LOOK HERE, THEN--
ONE OF YOUR LADS SAID I NEED PERMISSION TO TAKE THIS CARVED ROCK--
I'M A FELLOW OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW.
ROCK--?
FOUND IT IN THE RUBBLE-- QUITE RARE, QUITE RARE.
UNLESS I'M GREATLY MISTAKEN--IT'S OVER THREE THOUSAND YEARS OLD.
IN THE RUBBLE, YOU SAY? ODD...!
TWENTY-FIVE KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST OF CHARING CROSS, LONDON, THERE LIES THE DISTRICT OF ESHER, ON THE PORTMOUTH ROAD.
FOR FIVE CENTURIES, THE TOWN HAS BEEN BURIED IN ANONYMITY--
--BUT NOW, THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO MAKE RUDE ENTRY--

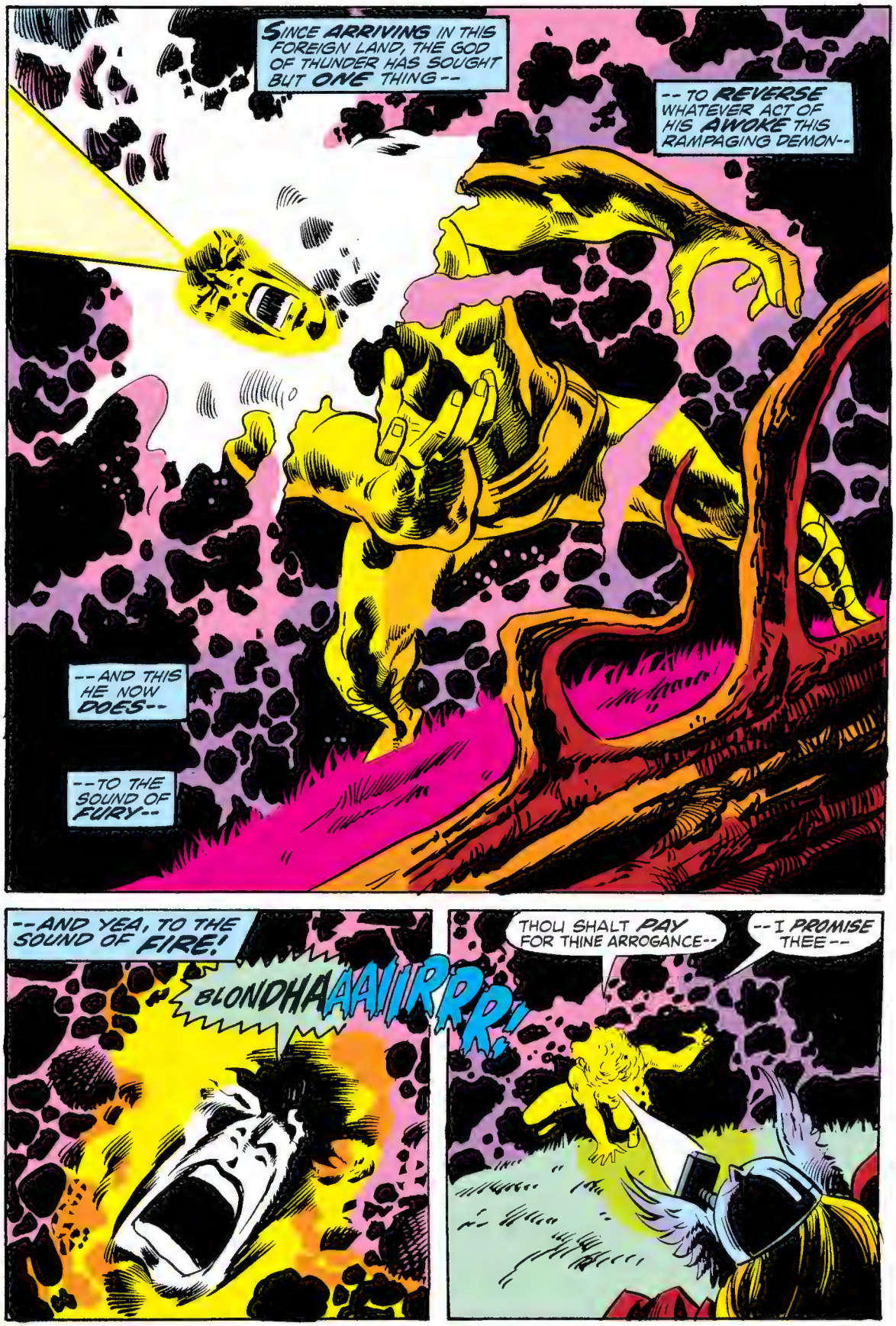
--IN THE FORM OF THE DEMON DRUID--
--AND THE MYSTIC HAMMER OF MIGHTY THOR!
SPUNT!
HO, DEMON!
WE TWAIN DO HAVE A BATTLE INCOMPLETE BETWEEN US--AND I DO CALL THEE TO IT--
NOW!
WITHOUT A WORD, THE SELF-STYLED DRUID SEEMS TO REACH OUT--
--POWER DRAINS FROM THE EVENING SKY--
-- AND LIKE A PILLAR OF EMERALD FLAME--
--THE POWER STRIKES!


ALMOST, THAT BLOW DID STUN ME--
--AND WERE I A FOOL, WELL IT MIGHT HAVE--
--BUT THE SON OF ODIN DOES INDEED LEARN FROM EVERY CONFLICT--AND WHAT DID FELL HIM ONCE--
--SHALL NE'ER FELL HIM AGAIN!
ODIN? THE NAME DOTH SUMMON DISTANT MEMORIES--
--YET THEY BE MEMORIES WITHOUT MEANING--
--FOR ODIN DOTH LIVE NO MORE!
KLUMP!
AND BEFORE THE MYSTERIOUS MEANING OF THE DRUID'S WORDS CAN BE DISCERNED--
THRAK!
--THE THUNDER GOD IS REMOVED FROM ACTIVE PARTICIPATION--
--WHILE WE PICK UP OUR STORY ELSEWHERE--TO BE EXACT, THE RESEARCH ROOM OF A WORLD-KNOWN LONDON LIBRARY.
AHHH... HERE WE ARE...

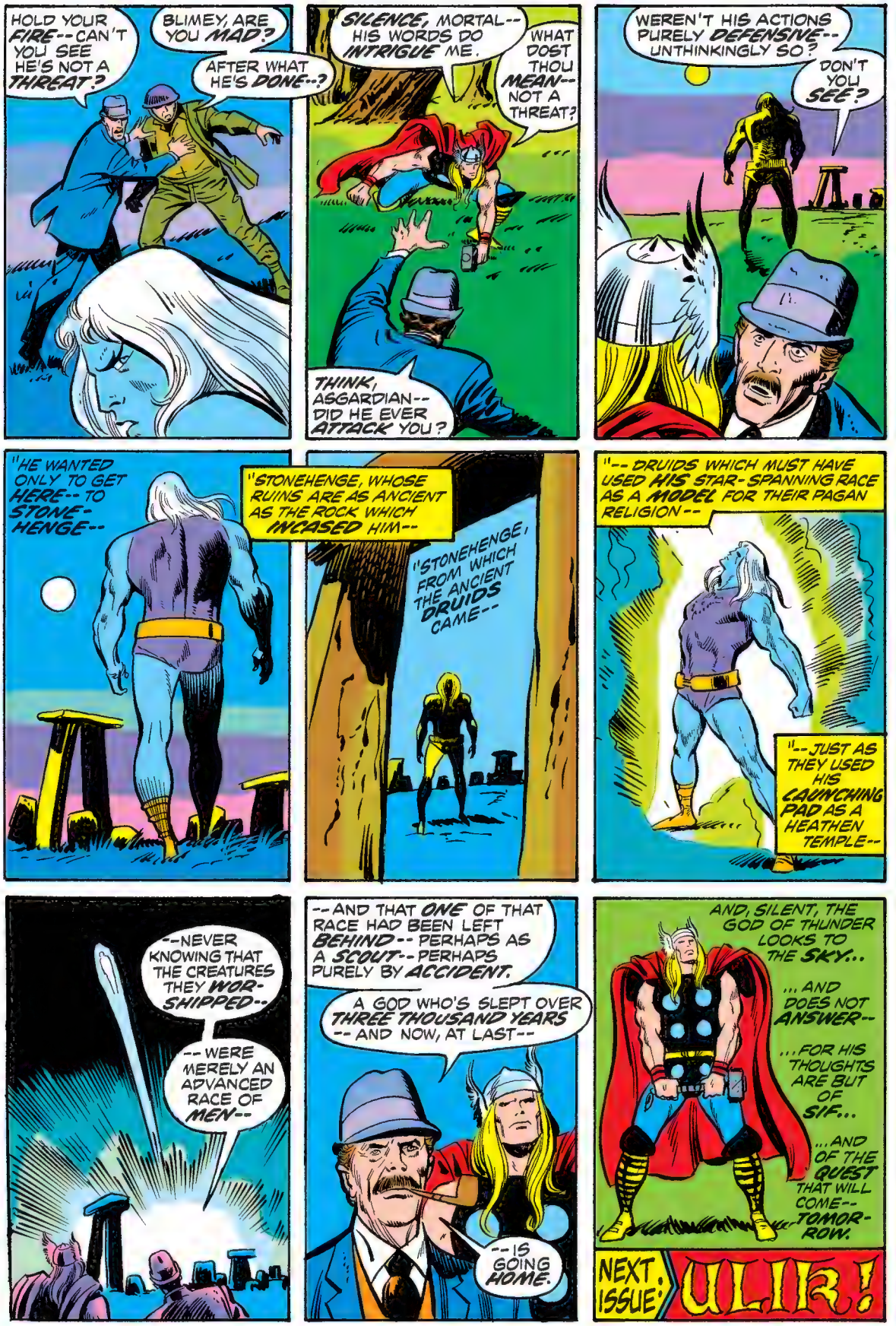

...PERHAPS NOW I'LL FIND THE ANSWERS I SEEK ...ASSUMING I KNOW THE PROPER QUESTIONS.
HMM. BUILT IN 1500 B.C....
YES, THAT WOULD FIT THE AGE OF OUR PROFESSOR'S RUDDY ROCKS...
...THAT AND THIS UNCANNY DESIGN...
...BOTH ON HIS CHEST... AND WITH THOSE STONES. IT HAS TO BE...
...IT JUST HAS TO BE!
STONEHENGE
AN HOUR PASSES... THEN TWO. AND WHEN, FINALLY, THE STUNNED GOD OF THUNDER REGAINS PAINFUL CONSCIOUSNESS...
...HE REGAINS ALSO... HIS RAGE!
MILES DISTANT, ON THE EDGE OF THE SALISBURY PLAIN, IN THE COUNTY OF WILTSHIRE, A GOD-LIKE FIGURE STRIDES THROUGH A FOREST OF ROTTING TREES--
-- TREES WHICH BEND AND WHIRL AWAY 'GAINST THE UNRESTRAINED MIGHT OF AN INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD--
--ULTIMATELY ATTRACTING THE SEARCHING, ANGERED THOR!
DRUID! 'TIS TIME FOR OUR FINAL MEETING--

--A MEETING WHICH MAY ONLY END IN DEATH.
TOO LONG HAVE I SLEPT-- TOO LONG HAVE I BEEN KEPT FROM MY LIFE'S PURPOSE..
--TO BE DEFEATED NOW BY THEE--
--SO LET THEE ATTACK, BLOND-HAIR--AND MAKE THY MOVE AN ELOQUENT ONE--
--FOR 'TWILL BE THE LAST THOU SHALT E'ER KNOW!
I SAY THEE NAY!
WHILE MY HAND THIS HAMMER DOTH HOLD--
--I WILL REMAIN-- MASTER OF THE WORLD'S WIND!
BACK, LADS-- THE BLIGHTERS ARE AT IT AGAIN!
LORD, AND THIS TIME THEY'VE GONE FULL CRACKER--
NOTHING CAN STOP THEM! NOTHING!
AND IF THE SOLDIERS WHO'VE FOLLOWED THE TWO COMBATANTS TO THIS PLAIN COULD SEE THE EYES OF THE DEMON DRUID--
--THEY'D KNOW THE TRAGIC TRUTH--


--THAT THE END-- THE ONLY POSSIBLE END--IS NEAR-- SO VERY NEAR!
FALL, IMPOSTOR--
IN THE NAME OF WODEN, WHY DOST THOU NOT FALL?
KRAAAAAK!
NO TIME DOES THE SON OF ODIN HAVE TO QUESTION THE DRUID'S WORDS--
--HE HAS ONLY A MOMENT TO ACT--
--TO REACH--
--TO GRASP--
--AND SO TO HALT HIS BACK-WARD FLIGHT--
--AND IN THE NEXT INSTANT--REVERSE THE EVENING'S EVENTS--
--WITH ONE ALL-CONSUMING BURST--FROM THE MALLET NAMED MJOLNIR!


SINCE ARRIVING IN THIS FOREIGN LAND, THE GOD OF THUNDER HAS SOUGHT BUT ONE THING--
--TO REVERSE WHATEVER ACT OF HIS AWOKE THIS RAMPAGING DEMON--
--AND THIS HE NOW DOES--
--TO THE SOUND OF FURY--
--AND YEA, TO THE SOUND OF FIRE!
BLONDHAAAIIRRR!
THOU SHALT PAY FOR THINE ARROGANCE--
--I PROMISE THEE--

--THOU SHALT PAY MOST DEAR!
ZZZZZZ--
WHUMP!
THEY'RE DOWN, LADS!
BOTH OF THEM!
CAREFUL, NOW-- THIS BLOKE'S A MITE DANGEROUS.
GENTLE WITH THAT NETTING..!
ONE MOMENT, SERGEANT-- YOU'LL BE MAKING A BIT OF A MISTAKE IF YOU TRY TO HOLD THAT--AH--MAN.
I HAVE FULL AUTHORITY IN THIS MATTER-- THE NAME'S PRICHARD. OF SCOTLAND YARD.
I DARE SAY, SIR-- WE CAN HANDLE HIM.
I'VE NO DOUBT OF IT, SERGEANT-- THE POINT IS, I DON'T THINK YOU'LL HAVE TO!
'E'S AWAKE AGAIN, SERGEANT!
COVER HIM, HAWKINS--


HOLD YOUR FIRE--CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S NOT A THREAT?
BLIMEY, ARE YOU MAD?
AFTER WHAT HE'S DONE--?
SILENCE, MORTAL--HIS WORDS DO INTRIGUE ME.
WHAT DOST THOU MEAN--NOT A THREAT?
THINK, ASGARDIAN--DID HE EVER ATTACK YOU?
WEREN'T HIS ACTIONS PURELY DEFENSIVE--UNTHINKINGLY SO?
DON'T YOU SEE?
"HE WANTED ONLY TO GET HERE--TO STONE-HENGE--
"STONEHENGE, WHOSE RUINS ARE AS ANCIENT AS THE ROCK WHICH INCASED HIM--
"STONEHENGE, FROM WHICH THE ANCIENT DRUIDS CAME--
"--DRUIDS WHICH MUST HAVE USED HIS STAR-SPANNING RACE AS A MODEL FOR THEIR PAGAN RELIGION--
"--JUST AS THEY USED HIS LAUNCHING PAD AS A HEATHEN TEMPLE--
--NEVER KNOWING THAT THE CREATURES THEY WORSHIPPED--
--WERE MERELY AN ADVANCED RACE OF MEN--
--AND THAT ONE OF THAT RACE HAD BEEN LEFT BEHIND--PERHAPS AS A SCOUT--PERHAPS PURELY BY ACCIDENT.
A GOD WHO'S SLEPT OVER THREE THOUSAND YEARS--AND NOW, AT LAST--
--IS GOING HOME.
AND, SILENT, THE GOD OF THUNDER LOOKS TO THE SKY...
...AND DOES NOT ANSWER--
...FOR HIS THOUGHTS ARE BUT OF SIF...
...AND OF THE QUEST THAT WILL COME--TOMORROW.
NEXT ISSUE: ULIK!

THOR
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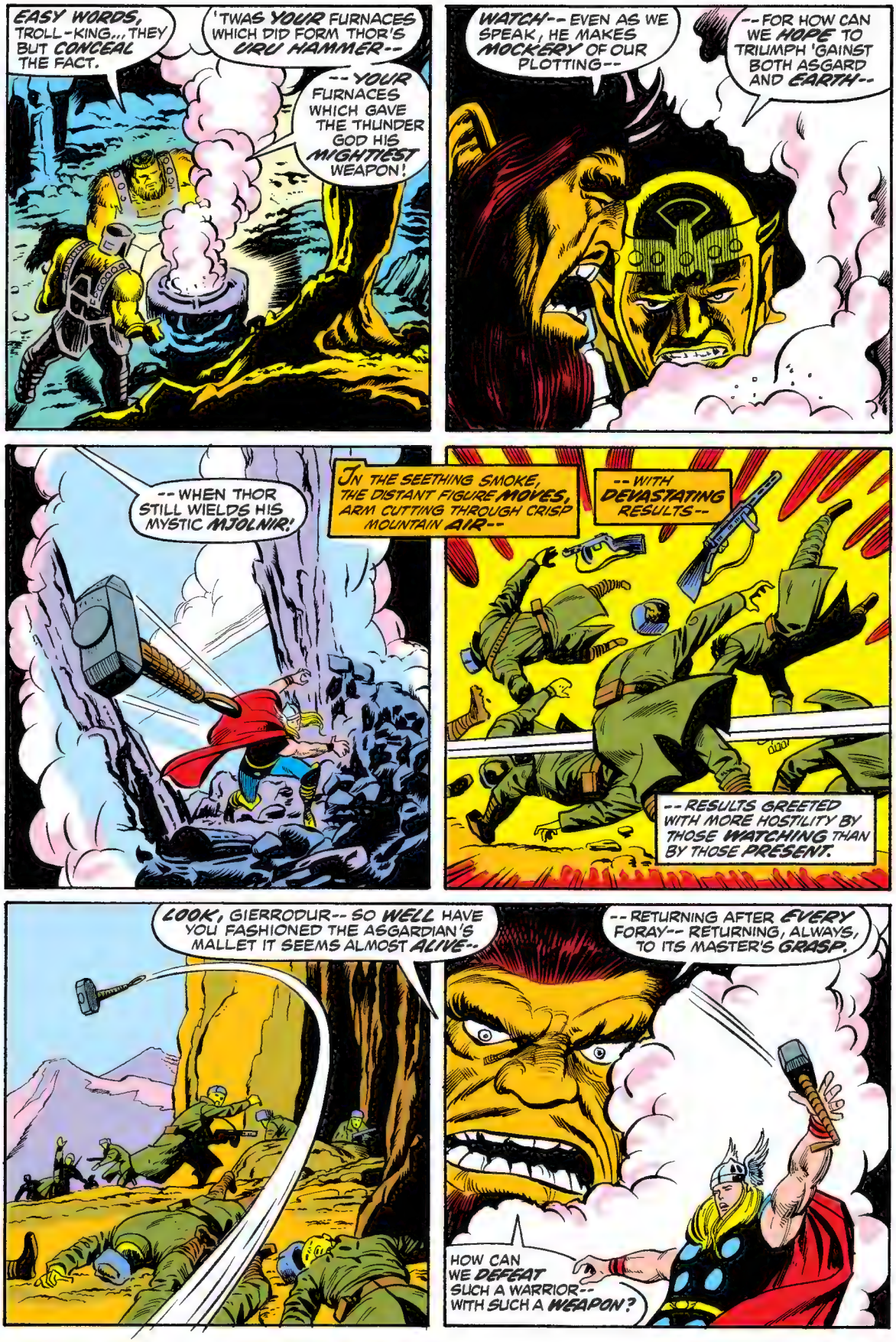
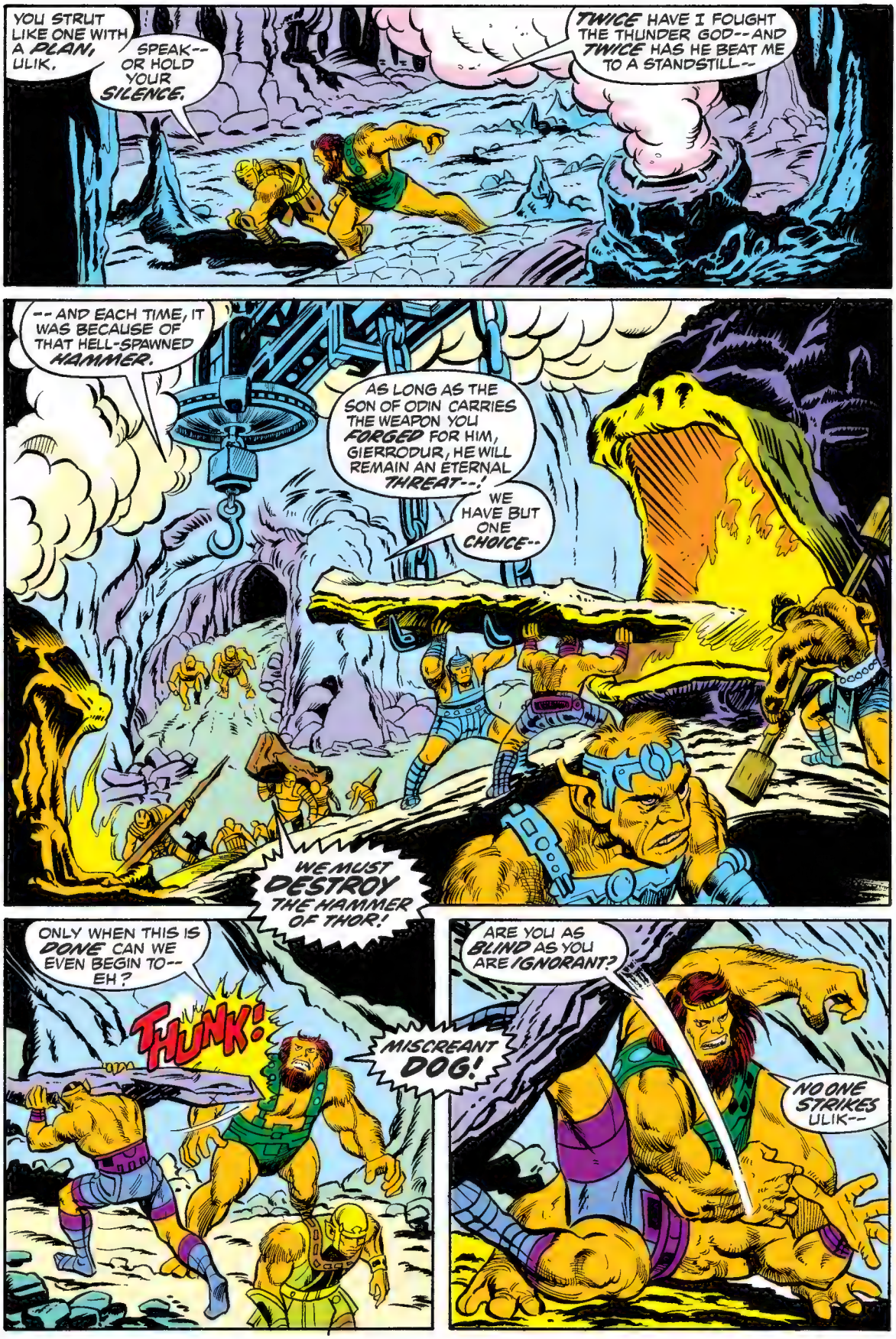
THE MIGHTY
THOR
NEVER SHALL SUCH AS THEE PREVAIL-- 'GAINST THE GOD OF THUNDER!!
STRIKE, GODLING! IT WILL AVAIL THEE NAUGHT!
FOR I BE ULIK, KING OF THE TROLLS!!
HELLFIRE--AND THE HAMMER!

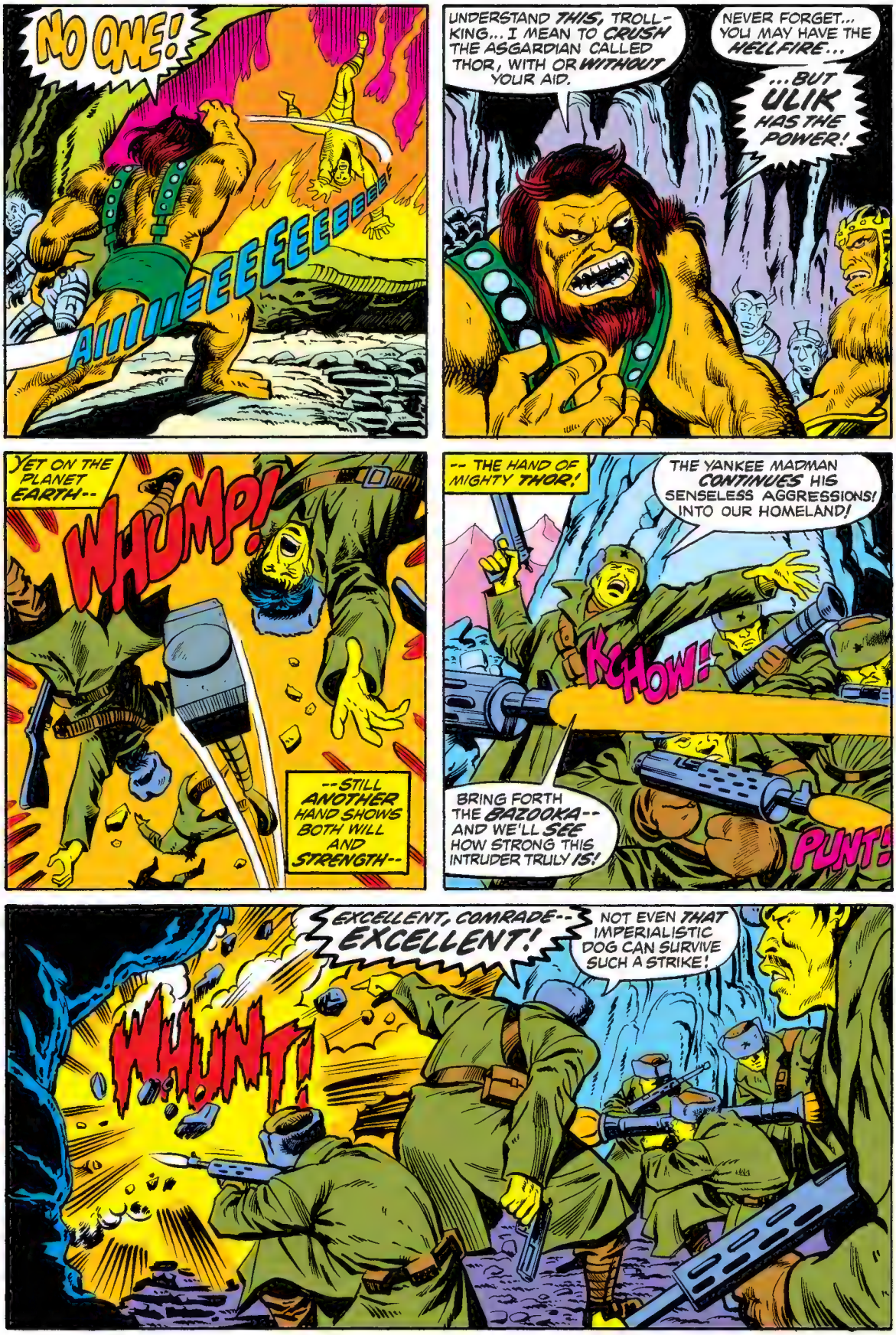
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

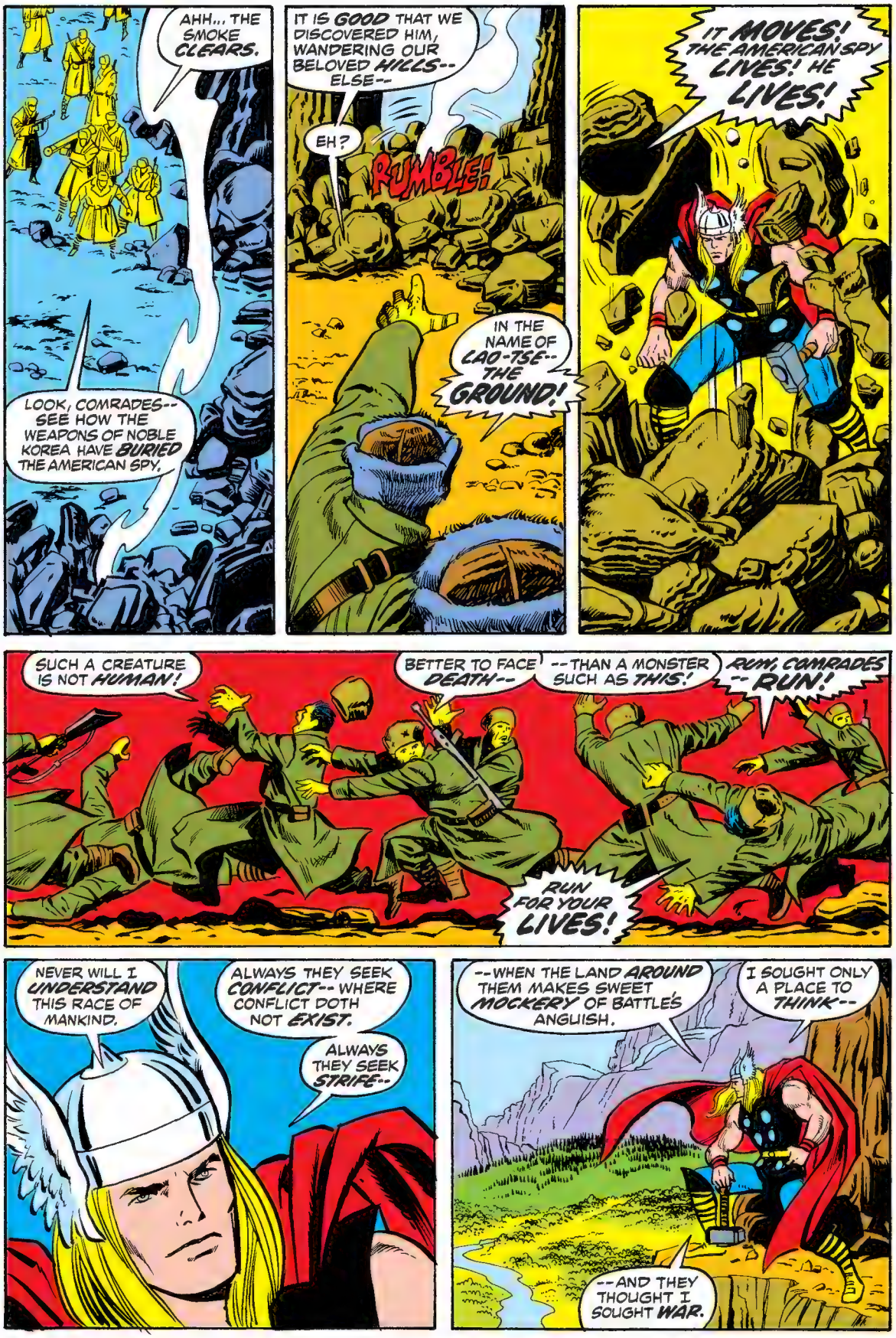
The HAMMER AND THE HELLFIRE!
LOOK, GIERRODUR!
SEE HOW WELL YOUR CURSED FORGES HAVE WROUGHT?
BECAUSE OF YOUR WIZARDRY, THE SON OF ODIN IS INVINCIBLE EVEN ON EARTH--
-- THEN ON EARTH WILL IT BE-- THAT THE GOD OF THUNDER DIES!

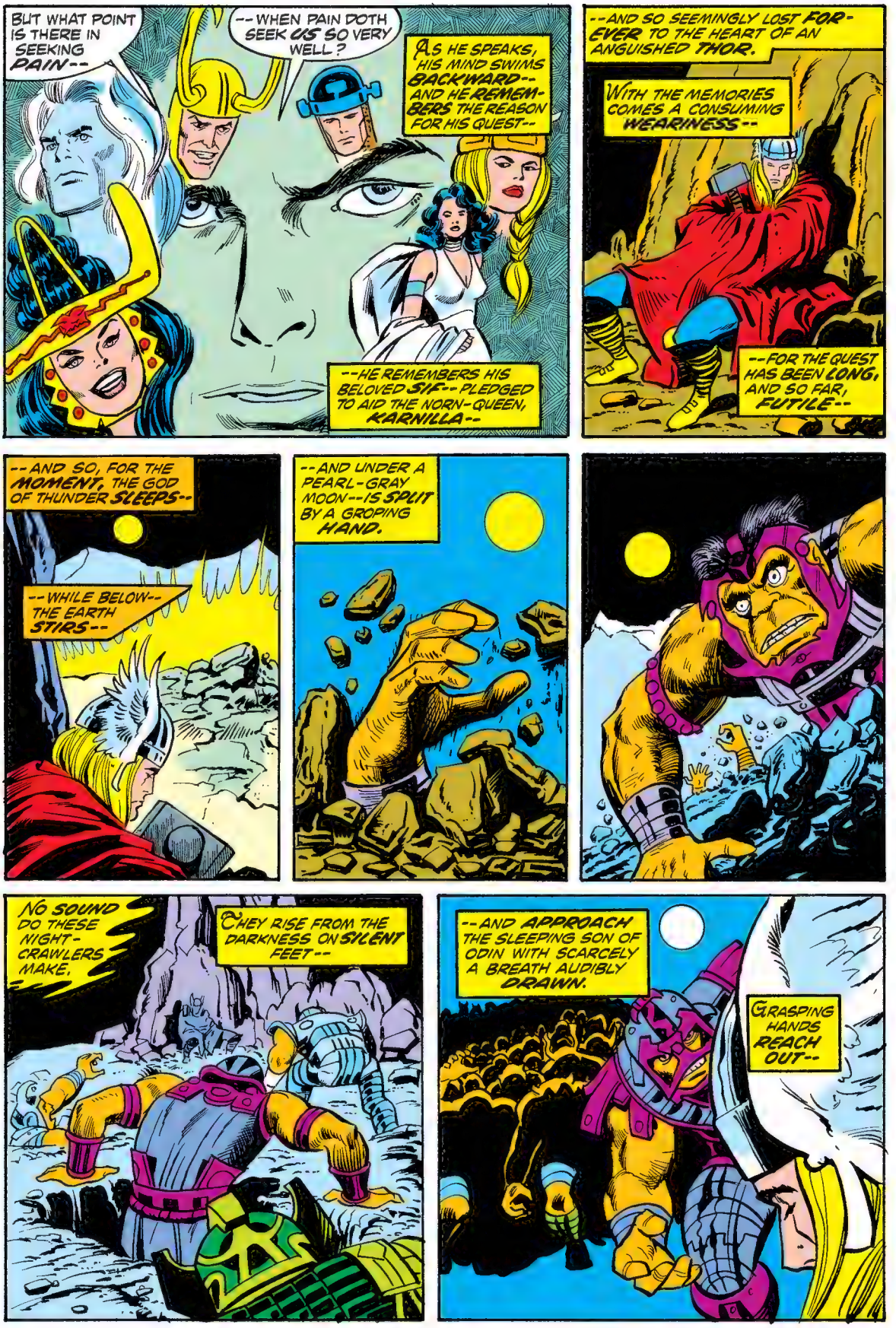
GERRY CONWAY, SCRIPTER // JOHN BUSCEMA, LAYOUTS // DON PERLIN, FINISHED ART // V. COLLETTA, INKER // J. COSTANZA, LETTERER // GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST // ROY THOMAS, EDITOR


EASY WORDS, TROLL-KING... THEY BUT CONCEAL THE FACT.
'TWAS YOUR FURNACES WHICH DID FORM THOR'S URU HAMMER--
--YOUR FURNACES WHICH GAVE THE THUNDER GOD HIS MIGHTIEST WEAPON!
WATCH-- EVEN AS WE SPEAK, HE MAKES MOCKERY OF OUR PLOTTING--
--FOR HOW CAN WE HOPE TO TRIUMPH 'GAINST BOTH ASGARD AND EARTH--
--WHEN THOR STILL WIELDS HIS MYSTIC MJOLNIR!
IN THE SEETHING SMOKE, THE DISTANT FIGURE MOVES, ARM CUTTING THROUGH CRISP MOUNTAIN AIR--
--WITH DEVASTATING RESULTS--
--RESULTS GREETED WITH MORE HOSTILITY BY THOSE WATCHING THAN BY THOSE PRESENT.
LOOK, GIERRODUR-- SO WELL HAVE YOU FASHIONED THE ASGARDIAN'S MALLET IT SEEMS ALMOST ALIVE--
--RETURNING AFTER EVERY FORAY-- RETURNING, ALWAYS, TO ITS MASTER'S GRASP.
HOW CAN WE DEFEAT SUCH A WARRIOR-- WITH SUCH A WEAPON?


YOU STRUT LIKE ONE WITH A PLAN, ULIK.
SPEAK-- OR HOLD YOUR SILENCE.
TWICE HAVE I FOUGHT THE THUNDER GOD-- AND TWICE HAS HE BEAT ME TO A STANDSTILL--
-- AND EACH TIME, IT WAS BECAUSE OF THAT HELL-SPAWNED HAMMER.
AS LONG AS THE SON OF ODIN CARRIES THE WEAPON YOU FORGED FOR HIM, GIERRODUR, HE WILL REMAIN AN ETERNAL THREAT--!
WE HAVE BUT ONE CHOICE--
WE MUST DESTROY THE HAMMER OF THOR!
ONLY WHEN THIS IS DONE CAN WE EVEN BEGIN TO-- EH?
THUNK!
MISCREANT DOG!
ARE YOU AS BLIND AS YOU ARE IGNORANT?
NO ONE STRIKES ULIK--

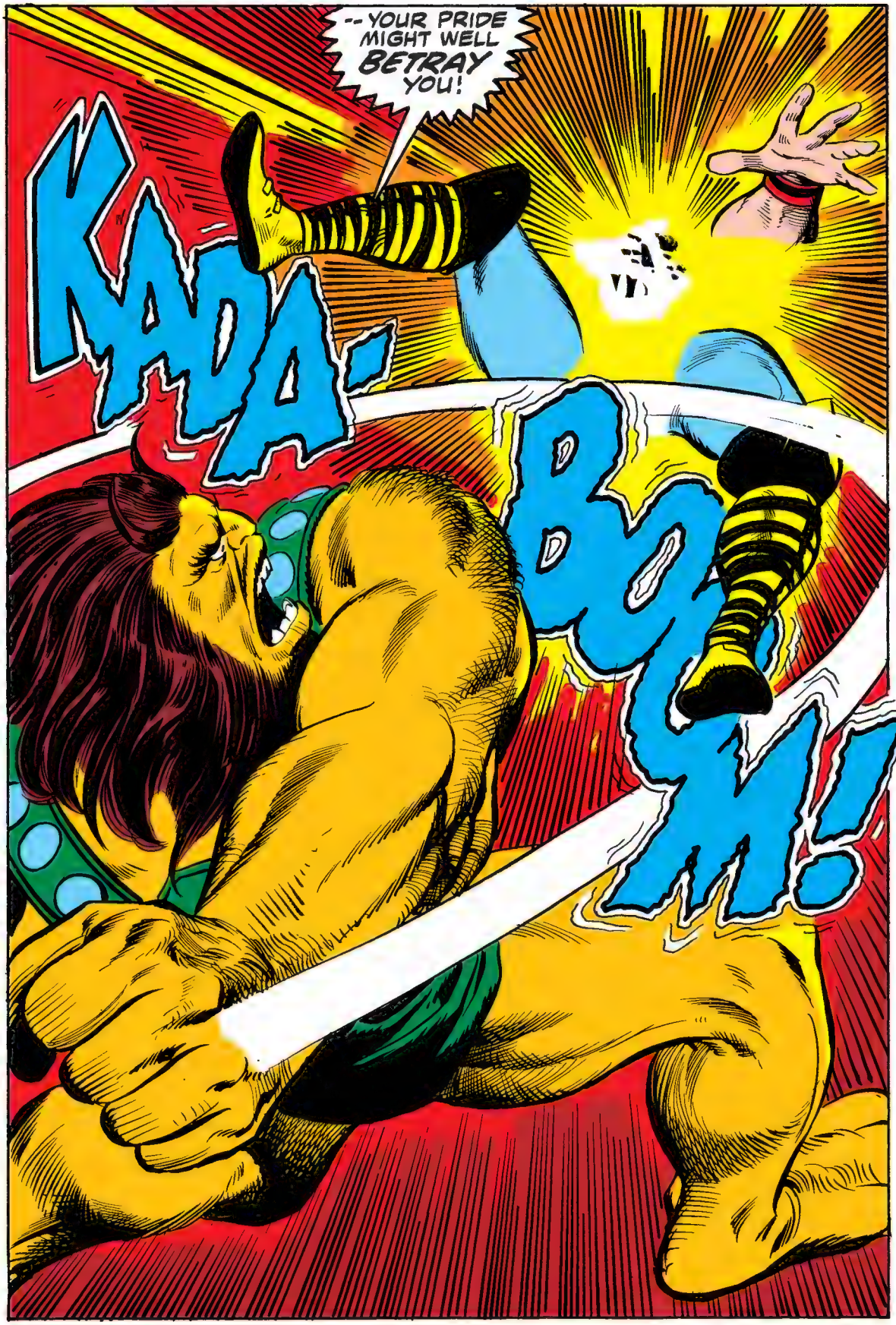

NO ONE!
AIIIIIEEEEEEEEEE!
UNDERSTAND THIS, TROLL-KING... I MEAN TO CRUSH THE ASGARDIAN CALLED THOR, WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR AID.
NEVER FORGET... YOU MAY HAVE THE HELLFIRE...
...BUT ULIK HAS THE POWER!
YET ON THE PLANET EARTH--
WHUMP!
--STILL ANOTHER HAND SHOWS BOTH WILL AND STRENGTH--
-- THE HAND OF MIGHTY THOR!
THE YANKEE MADMAN CONTINUES HIS SENSELESS AGGRESSIONS! INTO OUR HOMELAND!
KCHOW!
BRING FORTH THE BAZOOKA-- AND WE'LL SEE HOW STRONG THIS INTRUDER TRULY IS!
PUNT!
EXCELLENT, COMRADE-- EXCELLENT!
NOT EVEN THAT IMPERIALISTIC DOG CAN SURVIVE SUCH A STRIKE!
WHUNT!


AHH... THE SMOKE CLEARS.
LOOK, COMRADES-- SEE HOW THE WEAPONS OF NOBLE KOREA HAVE BURIED THE AMERICAN SPY.
IT IS GOOD THAT WE DISCOVERED HIM, WANDERING OUR BELOVED HILLS-- ELSE--
EH?
RUMBLE!
IN THE NAME OF LAO-TSE-- THE GROUND!
IT MOVES! THE AMERICAN SPY LIVES! HE LIVES!
SUCH A CREATURE IS NOT HUMAN!
BETTER TO FACE DEATH--
--THAN A MONSTER SUCH AS THIS!
RUN, COMRADES -- RUN!
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!
NEVER WILL I UNDERSTAND THIS RACE OF MANKIND.
ALWAYS THEY SEEK CONFLICT-- WHERE CONFLICT DOTH NOT EXIST.
ALWAYS THEY SEEK STRIFE--
--WHEN THE LAND AROUND THEM MAKES SWEET MOCKERY OF BATTLE'S ANGUISH.
I SOUGHT ONLY A PLACE TO THINK--
--AND THEY THOUGHT I SOUGHT WAR.

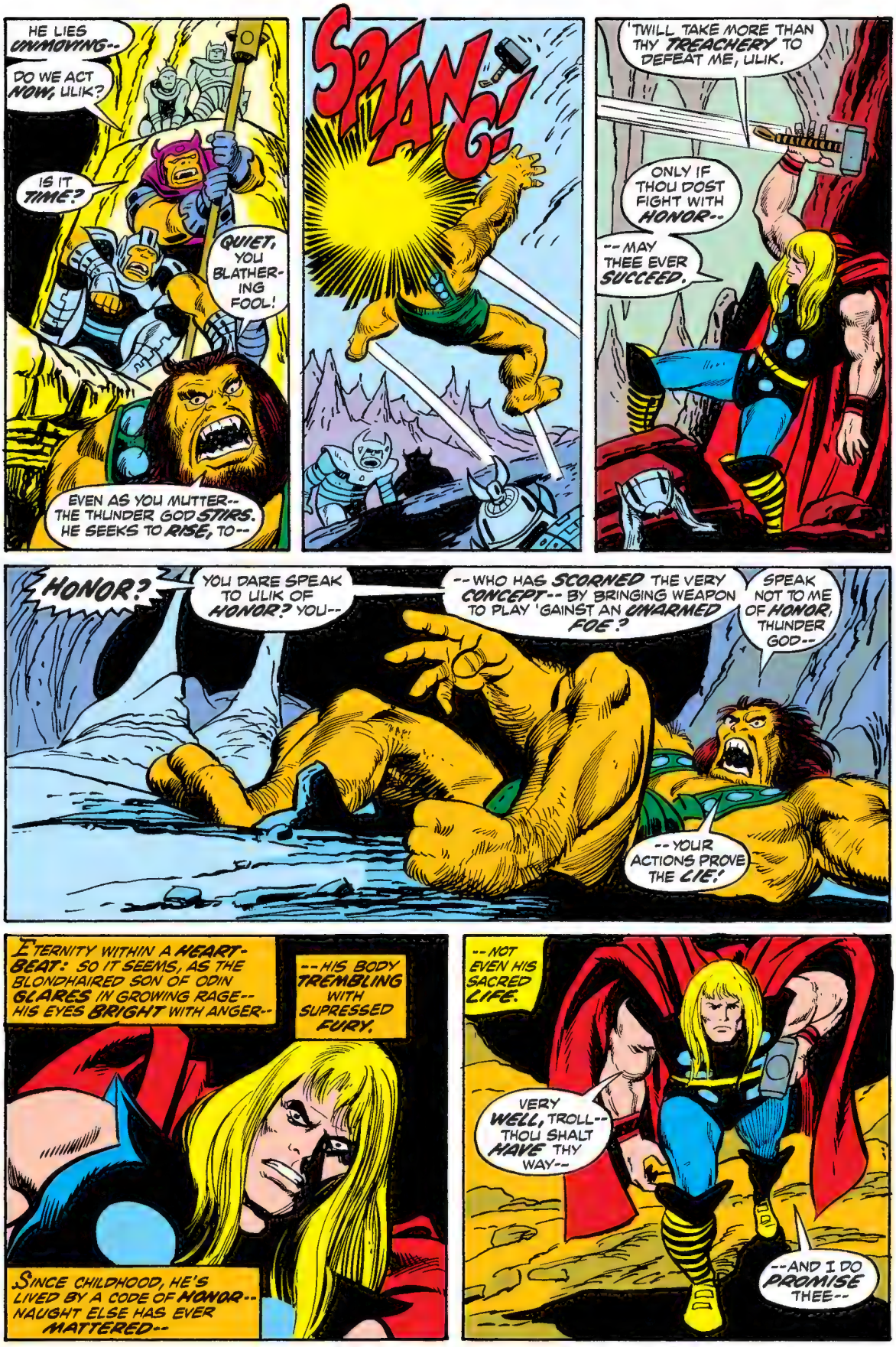

BUT WHAT POINT IS THERE IN SEEKING PAIN--
--WHEN PAIN DOTH SEEK US SO VERY WELL?
AS HE SPEAKS, HIS MIND SWIMS BACKWARD-- AND HE REMEMBERS THE REASON FOR HIS QUEST--
--HE REMEMBERS HIS BELOVED SIF-- PLEDGED TO AID THE NORN-QUEEN, KARNILLA--
--AND SO SEEMINGLY LOST FOREVER TO THE HEART OF AN ANGUISHED THOR.
WITH THE MEMORIES COMES A CONSUMING WEARINESS--
--FOR THE QUEST HAS BEEN LONG, AND SO FAR, FUTILE--
--AND SO, FOR THE MOMENT, THE GOD OF THUNDER SLEEPS--
--WHILE BELOW-- THE EARTH STIRS--
--AND UNDER A PEARL-GRAY MOON--IS SPLIT BY A GROPING HAND.
NO SOUND DO THESE NIGHT-CRAWLERS MAKE.
THEY RISE FROM THE DARKNESS ON SILENT FEET--
--AND APPROACH THE SLEEPING SON OF ODIN WITH SCARCELY A BREATH AUDIBLY DRAWN.
GRASPING HANDS REACH OUT--

--TOUCH--
--AND IN THE FOLLOWING INSTANT, A GOLDEN GLOW SPRINGS UP ABOUT THE MOONLIT FORMS--
--AND WHEN THE GLOW IS GONE--
--GONE ALSO IS THE SUN-HAIRED GOD OF THUNDER!
QUICKLY, BROTHERS, QUICKLY. THE ASGARDIAN STIRS--IN ANOTHER MOMENT, HE'LL WAKE.
WHO AMONG YOU WOULD FACE ULIK'S WRATH IF THE BLONDHAIR ESCAPES?
QUIET, TREMMIDUR. YOUR MUTTERINGS WILL UNDO US ALL.
IF ANY WAKES THE ODINSON--'TWILL BE YOU--AND YOUR BLASTED GRANITE VOICE.
SILENCE, ALL OF YOU!
WE APPROACH THE BRIDGE OF WINDS.

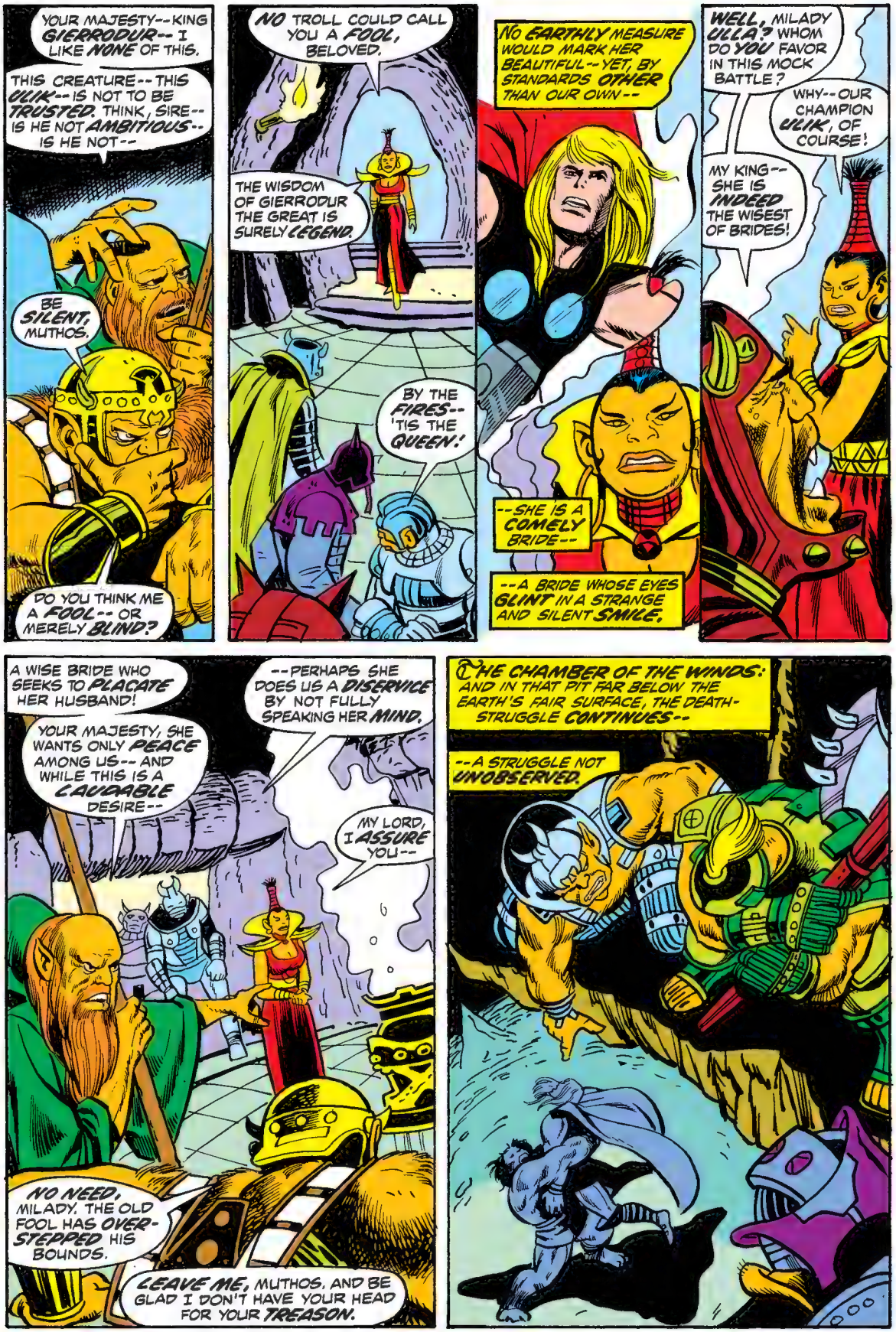
THE EXHORTATION TO SILENCE IS ALREADY TOO LATE, HOWEVER--
--FOR EVEN AS THE TROLLS' COMPLAINTS SUBSIDE--
--THE THUNDER GOD AWAKES!
KA-POW!
WHAT MEANS THIS STEALTHY INTRUSION?
EXPLAIN THYSELF, TROLL--OR FACE THE ANGRY HAMMER OF THOR!
YOUR THREATS ARE EMPTY, THUNDER GOD.
HERE--YOU FIGHT IN OUR LAND!
AND FIGHT I SHALL--
--'TILL ONE OF THEE DOTH SPEAK--
--AND GIVE CLEAR MEANING TO THIS MADNESS!
YOU SHALL FIGHT--AND DIE, ASGARDIAN!
I SAY THEE NAY!
THE SON OF ODIN SHALL NEVER FALL AT THY HAND--NEVER!
BE NOT SO SURE, NOBLE THUNDER GOD--


-- YOUR PRIDE MIGHT WELL BETRAY YOU!
KA-DA-
BOOM!

WHOOOSH!
SNAK!
OF ALL THOSE WHO WALK BENEATH THE EARTH, ULIK IS THE STRONGEST--
--AND YET-- TWICE HAVE I SUFFERED HUMILIATION AT THE HANDS OF AN ASGARDIAN--
--TWICE HAVE I FELT THE FLUSH OF FRUSTRATED RAGE-- KNOWING THAT MINE WAS THE GREATER STRENGTH--
--YET YOURS THE GREATER WEAPON!
THY WORDS MEAN NAUGHT TO ME, MONSTER.
WHEN I HAVE WON, I HAVE WON BY SKILL AND STRENGTH ALONE!
WHO DARES CLAIM OTHER-WISE?
I DARE, BLONDHAIR!
BUNCH!
I-- ULIK THE INVINCIBLE!
ULIK-- THE UNCONTROLLED!

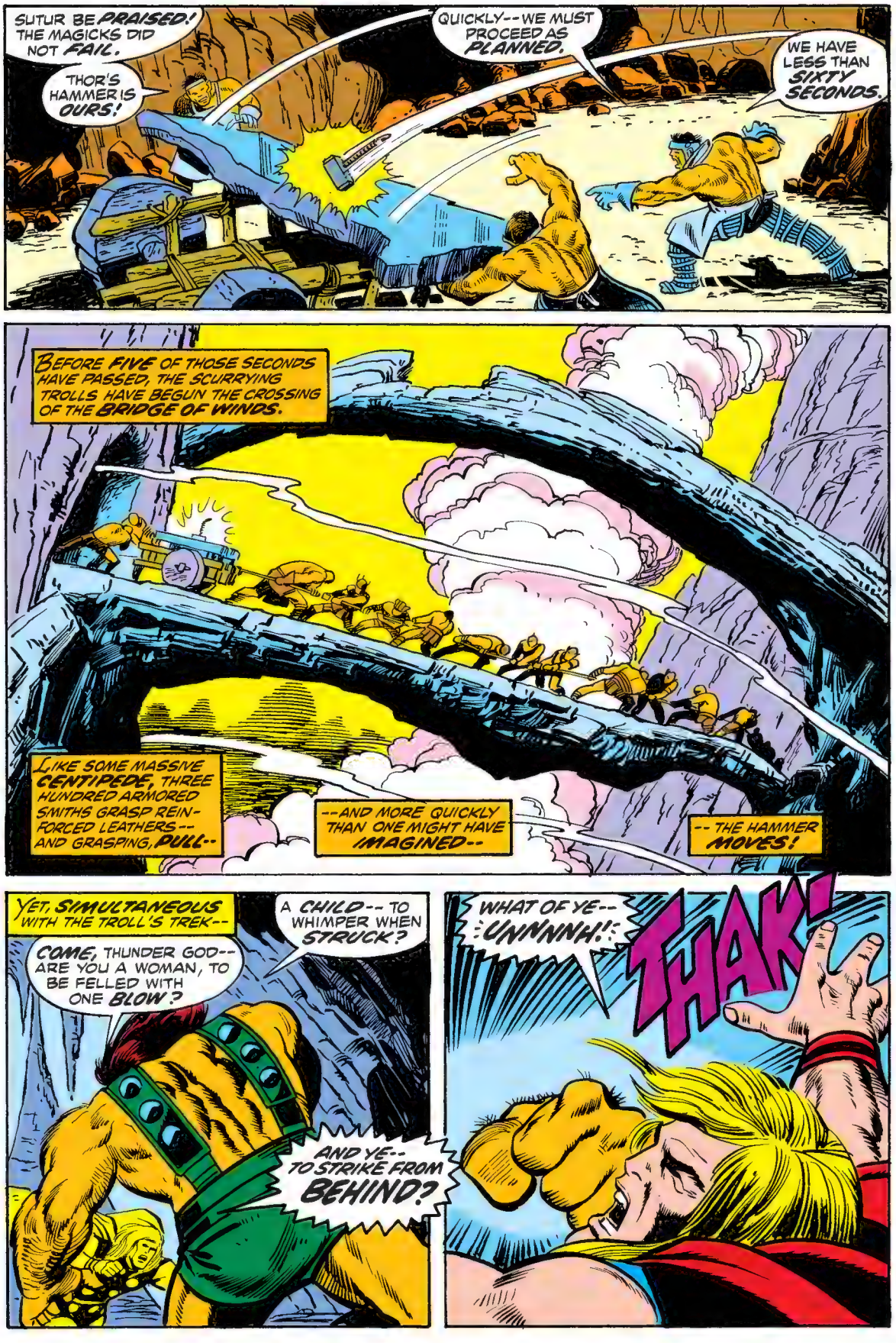

HE LIES UNMOVING--
DO WE ACT NOW, ULIK?
IS IT TIME?
QUIET, YOU BLATHERING FOOL!
EVEN AS YOU MUTTER-- THE THUNDER GOD STIRS. HE SEEKS TO RISE, TO--
SPTANG!
'TWILL TAKE MORE THAN THY TREACHERY TO DEFEAT ME, ULIK.
ONLY IF THOU DOST FIGHT WITH HONOR--
--MAY THEE EVER SUCCEED.
HONOR?
YOU DARE SPEAK TO ULIK OF HONOR? YOU--
--WHO HAS SCORNED THE VERY CONCEPT-- BY BRINGING WEAPON TO PLAY 'GAINST AN UNARMED FOE?
SPEAK NOT TO ME OF HONOR, THUNDER GOD--
--YOUR ACTIONS PROVE THE LIE!
ETERNITY WITHIN A HEART-BEAT: SO IT SEEMS, AS THE BLONDHAIRED SON OF ODIN GLARES IN GROWING RAGE-- HIS EYES BRIGHT WITH ANGER--
--HIS BODY TREMBLING WITH SUPRESSED FURY.
SINCE CHILDHOOD, HE'S LIVED BY A CODE OF HONOR-- NAUGHT ELSE HAS EVER MATTERED--
--NOT EVEN HIS SACRED LIFE.
VERY WELL, TROLL-- THOU SHALT HAVE THY WAY--
--AND I DO PROMISE THEE--

--THOU SHALT LIVE TO REGRET IT--
--YEA, REGRET IT INDEED!
WHACKO!
IMPUDENT PUP!
OF ALL THE MIGHTY TROLLS-- ULIK IS STRONGEST-- ULIK, THE MOST POWERFUL!
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN--
NAY, NOT THINK, MONSTER--
VERILY, I KNOW!
THE SMOKE REVEALS, MAJESTY-- ALL GOES WELL IN THE CHAMBER OF THE WINDS!
AYE, SIRE! THE EXILED ASGARDIAN IS STILL UNAWARE OF THE PURPOSE BEHIND THIS BATTLE.
SUTUR WILLING, NEVER MAY HE LEARN-- 'TILL IT IS FAR, FAR TOO LATE!


YOUR MAJESTY--KING GIERRODUR-- I LIKE NONE OF THIS.
THIS CREATURE--THIS ULIK--IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED. THINK, SIRE--IS HE NOT AMBITIOUS--IS HE NOT--
BE SILENT, MUTHOS.
DO YOU THINK ME A FOOL-- OR MERELY BLIND?
NO TROLL COULD CALL YOU A FOOL, BELOVED.
THE WISDOM OF GIERRODUR THE GREAT IS SURELY LEGEND.
BY THE FIRES--'TIS THE QUEEN!
NO EARTHLY MEASURE WOULD MARK HER BEAUTIFUL--YET, BY STANDARDS OTHER THAN OUR OWN--
--SHE IS A COMELY BRIDE--
--A BRIDE WHOSE EYES GLINT IN A STRANGE AND SILENT SMILE.
WELL, MILADY ULLA? WHOM DO YOU FAVOR IN THIS MOCK BATTLE?
WHY--OUR CHAMPION ULIK, OF COURSE!
MY KING--SHE IS INDEED THE WISEST OF BRIDES!
A WISE BRIDE WHO SEEKS TO PLACATE HER HUSBAND!
YOUR MAJESTY, SHE WANTS ONLY PEACE AMONG US--AND WHILE THIS IS A CAUDABLE DESIRE--
--PERHAPS SHE DOES US A DISERVICE BY NOT FULLY SPEAKING HER MIND.
MY LORD, I ASSURE YOU--
NO NEED, MILADY. THE OLD FOOL HAS OVER-STEPPED HIS BOUNDS.
LEAVE ME, MUTHOS, AND BE GLAD I DON'T HAVE YOUR HEAD FOR YOUR TREASON.
THE CHAMBER OF THE WINDS: AND IN THAT PIT FAR BELOW THE EARTH'S FAIR SURFACE, THE DEATH-STRUGGLE CONTINUES--
--A STRUGGLE NOT UNOBSERVED.

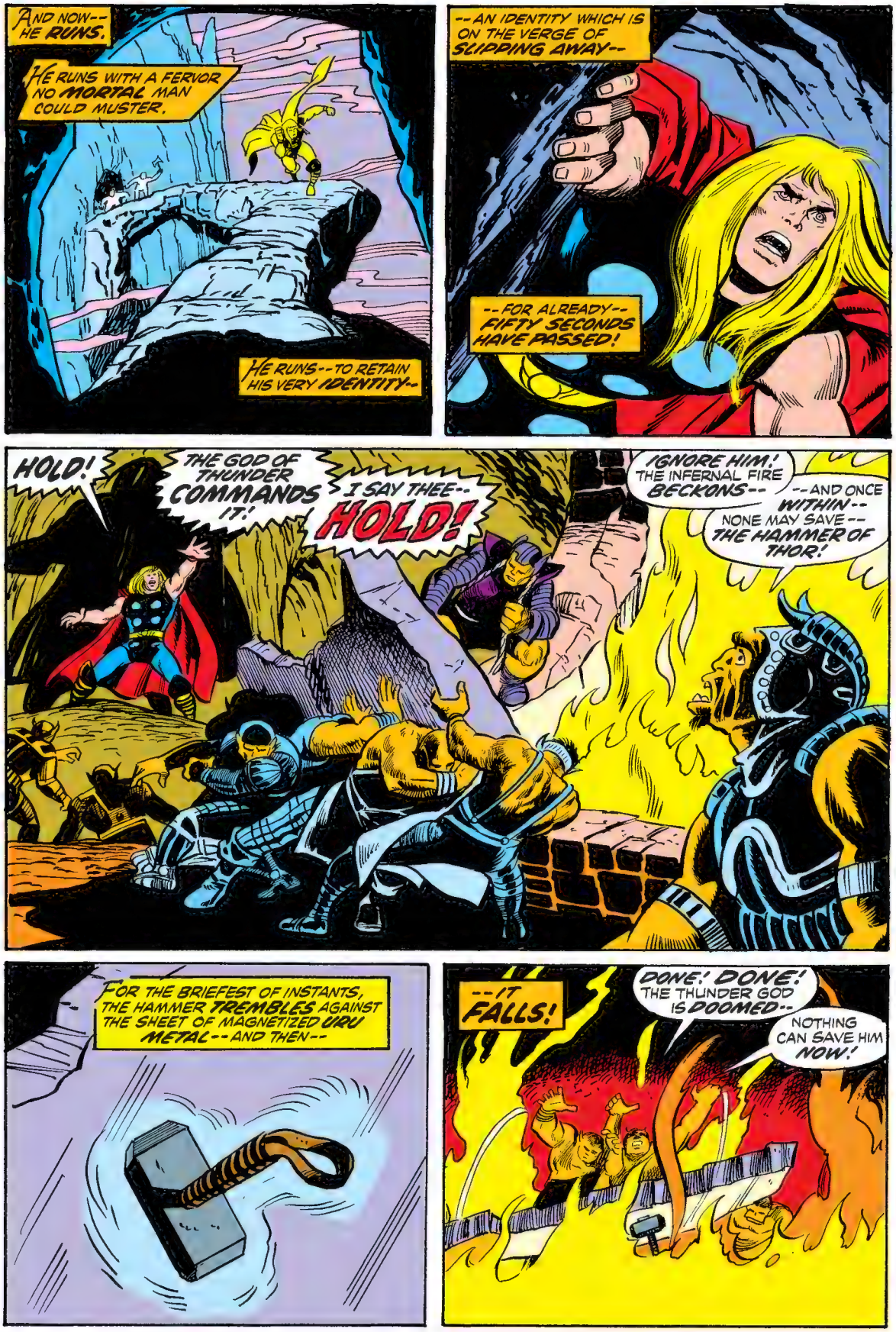
NO CRY ESCAPES THESE NOBLE LIPS--NO MOAN TO BETRAY THE GRATING PAIN.
SUCH WOULD NOT BEFIT THE SON OF ODIN--
--EVEN A SON EXILED FOR THE UNPARDONABLE SIN OF ANGER 'GAINST HIS FATHER'S HOUSE*--
--AN ANGER NOW FOCUSED ELSEWHERE--
--AS THE GOD OF THUNDER STRIKES!
*THOR #203, --ROY.
MY SKULL--IT RINGS LIKE A STRUCK GONG!
ASGARDIAN--WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
BUT THOR DOES NOT ANSWER.
THE PAIN IS TOO GREAT TO SPEAK--AND SO HE SAYS NAUGHT.
NOW!
BRING FORTH THE URU PLATE--HURRY, YOU STUMBLING MISCREANTS!
KNOW YOU THE WEIGHT OF THIS CURSED METAL?
BE THANKFUL WE LIFT IT AT ALL!
YOU DANCE WITH DEATH, SLAVE!

OR ARE YOU SO IGNORANT YOU KNOW NOT THE NATURE OF THAT "CURSED METAL"?
'TIS THE SAME METAL AS THAT WHICH FORMS YON GODLING'S HAMMER--
--WHICH, BECAUSE OF ODIN'S SPELL, IS TOO HEAVY FOR ANY TO LIFT SAVE THOR.
NOT SO THIS METAL YOU HOLD-- THIS MAGNETIZED METAL--
WITH IT-- WE SHALL WIN THE DAY--
--AYE, AND ALL TIME!
BY THE FENRIS WOLF-- WHAT MYSTICISM DOTH ATTACK ME?
SOME UNSEEN FORCE DOTH DRAW 'PON MY HAMMER, MJOLNIR--
--DRAGGING --LIKE A THING ALIVE!
YET, AS THOR TAKES FIRM HOLD OF HIS BELTED HAMMER--
--THE TROLL CALLED ULIK PREPARES A DISTRACTING BLOW--
WHONK!
--WHICH HE DELIVERS--
NOW, YOU MINDLESS CLODS--
NOW!
WITH THE SLIGHTEST SOUND OF TEARING LEATHER-- THE HAMMER PULLS FREE-- AND THE DEED-- IS DONE.


SUTUR BE PRAISED! THE MAGICKS DID NOT FAIL.
THOR'S HAMMER IS OURS!
QUICKLY--WE MUST PROCEED AS PLANNED.
WE HAVE LESS THAN SIXTY SECONDS.
BEFORE FIVE OF THOSE SECONDS HAVE PASSED, THE SCURRYING TROLLS HAVE BEGUN THE CROSSING OF THE BRIDGE OF WINDS.
LIKE SOME MASSIVE CENTIPEDE, THREE HUNDRED ARMORED SMITHS GRASP REINFORCED LEATHERS--AND GRASPING, PULL--
--AND MORE QUICKLY THAN ONE MIGHT HAVE IMAGINED--
--THE HAMMER MOVES!
YET, SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE TROLL'S TREK--
COME, THUNDER GOD--ARE YOU A WOMAN, TO BE FELLED WITH ONE BLOW?
A CHILD--TO WHIMPER WHEN STRUCK?
AND YE--TO STRIKE FROM BEHIND?
WHAT OF YE--
:UNNNH!:
THAK!

I? I AM A WARRIOR BORN, ASGARDIAN!
YOUR KIND AND MINE HAVE FOREVER WARRED-- WILL FOREVER WAR--
--AND IN WARS SUCH AS THIS--
--ALL WEAPONS ARE FAIR!
KRUNCH!
THEN THY POSE OF "HONOR"-- 'TWAS MERELY THAT, A POSE?
AYE, A MOMENT'S POSTURE..
--NO MORE!
THOU MUST THINK THYSELF ABOVE THE FATE OF MEN AND GODS--
--AND SO NEED BE RUDELY WAKENED!
HEIMDAL'S EYES! MY HAMMER-- GONE!
NOW, ULIK-- WHILST HIS ATTENTION IS ELSEWHERE..
IN ANOTHER THIRTY SECONDS-- 'TWILL BE A HOLLOW VICTORY!
THUNDER GOD--LOOK BEHIND YOU!
SNAK!
MORE TREACHERY! BUT THAT WARNING VOICE-- WHO--?

MILADY--DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE?
YOU SAVED THE ASGARDIAN --ARE YOU MAD?
THEN-- 'TWAS THY CRY?
AYE, ODINSON -- BUT PRAY, ASK NOT WHY--
FOR IN TRUTH-- I DO NOT KNOW--
DO NOT KNOW?
PERHAPS--THE THOUGHT OF ONE SO FAIR--
--SO UNFAIRLY DONE?
WHATE'ER THE REASON, MILADY--
THOU DOTH HAVE THE GRATITUDE OF THOR--
--GRATITUDE THINE-- ETERNAL.
ETERNITY?
FOOL-- YOU HAVE LESS THAN A HEART-BEAT!
IN BUT ANOTHER MOMENT--
-- I SHALL REVERT TO HUMAN FORM--
THAT WHICH MUST EVER OCCUR, WHEN THOR AND HAMMER PART!
NOW I SEE THY PLAN, TROLL--
THOU HAST STOLEN THAT WHICH DOTH ALLOW ME TO MAINTAIN THIS GODLING FORM 'PON PLANET EARTH--
--ALREADY, MOST OF A MINUTE HAS PASSED--
--MOST, MONSTER-- BUT NOT ALL!
BAKOOM


AND NOW-- HE RUNS.
HE RUNS WITH A FERVOR NO MORTAL MAN COULD MUSTER.
HE RUNS--TO RETAIN HIS VERY IDENTITY--
--AN IDENTITY WHICH IS ON THE VERGE OF SLIPPING AWAY--
--FOR ALREADY-- FIFTY SECONDS HAVE PASSED!
HOLD!
THE GOD OF THUNDER COMMANDS IT!
I SAY THEE-- HOLD!
IGNORE HIM! THE INFERNAL FIRE BECKONS--
--AND ONCE WITHIN-- NONE MAY SAVE-- THE HAMMER OF THOR!
FOR THE BRIEFEST OF INSTANTS, THE HAMMER TREMBLES AGAINST THE SHEET OF MAGNETIZED URU METAL--AND THEN--
--IT FALLS!
DONE! DONE! THE THUNDER GOD IS DOOMED--
NOTHING CAN SAVE HIM NOW!

NAY! A THOUSAND TIMES--NAY!
NOT IN SUCH A MANNER WILL THOR MEET DESTRUCTION--
--EVER SHALL HE BE HIS FATE'S MASTER--
--TO THE END-- YEA, THE VERY END!
BY THE SEVEN WINDS--
A VICTORY MORE FITTING THAN ANY I DREAMED!
HE'D PLUNGED TO HIS DEATH--
-- JUST FOR THAT MYSTIC HAMMER!
THEN 'TIS OVER--'TIS DONE!
NOW NONE STANDS BETWEEN US AND THE EARTH--
ASGARD, TOO, WILL BE OURS!
OURS!
NO LONGER NEED WE COWER BENEATH THE EARTH--
NO LONGER NEED WE SCURRY FROM EVERY SHADOW--EVERY TWISTED SHAPE!
NOW--THE MOMENT OF TRIUMPH IS AT HAND--
--THE MOMENT OF ULTIMATE REVENGE!
STRIKE, BROTHERS--STRIKE, WHILE THE WILL IS STRONG--
--STRIKE--
VENGEANCE IS OURS!

THOR
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THE MIGHTY
THOR
™
STAY AWAY, THUNDER GOD--OR ELSE YOU PERISH, WITH ALL MANKIND!
AWAY, I COMMAND YOU!
AND I SAY THEE NAY!
IF EARTH MUST DIE--LET THOR DIE, TOO!
ULIK INVADES THE SURFACE WORLD!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

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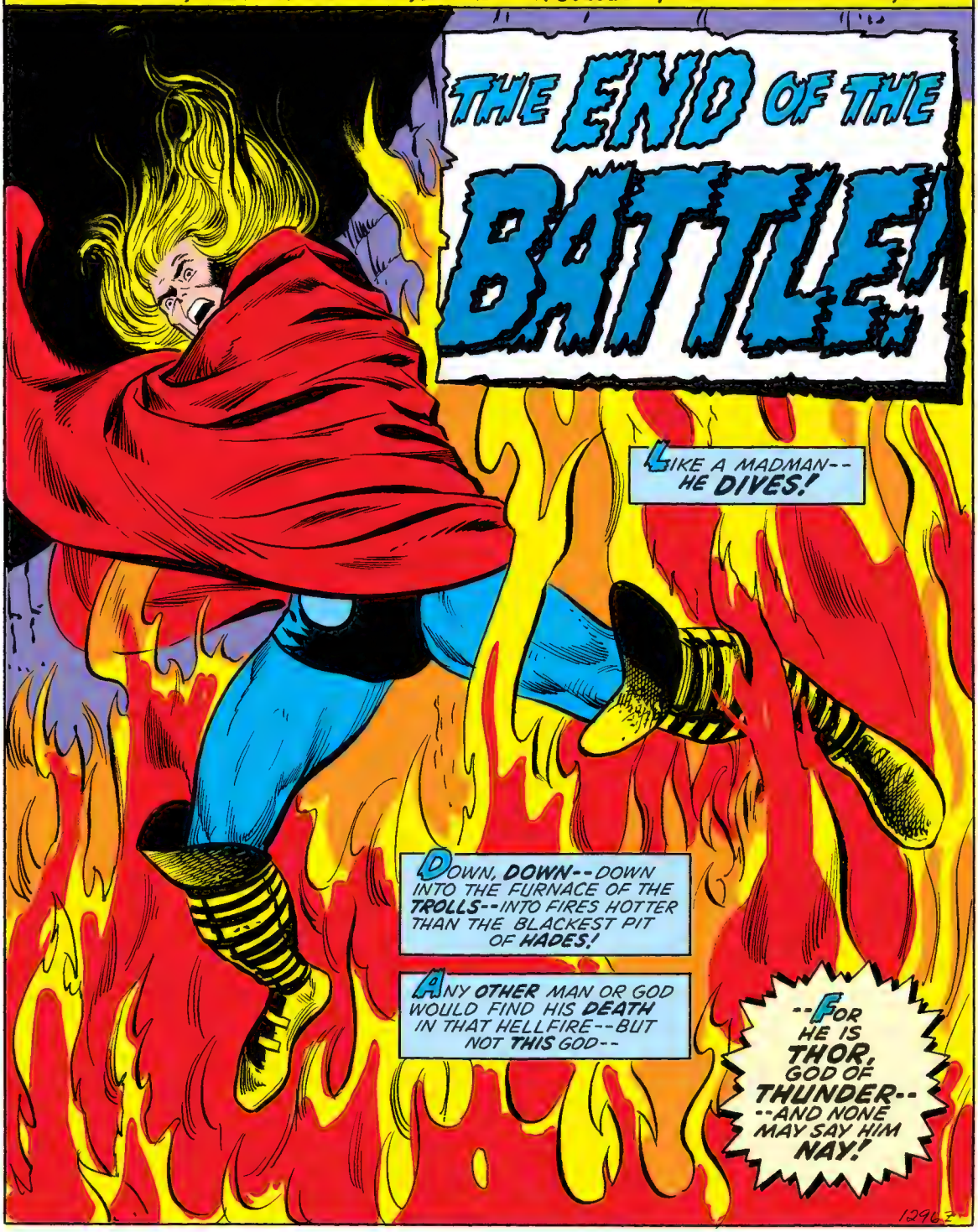
THE END OF THE BATTLE!
LIKE A MADMAN-- HE DIVES!
DOWN, DOWN--DOWN INTO THE FURNACE OF THE TROLLS--INTO FIRES HOTTER THAN THE BLACKEST PIT OF HADES!
ANY OTHER MAN OR GOD WOULD FIND HIS DEATH IN THAT HELLFIRE--BUT NOT THIS GOD--
--FOR HE IS THOR, GOD OF THUNDER-- --AND NONE MAY SAY HIM NAY!
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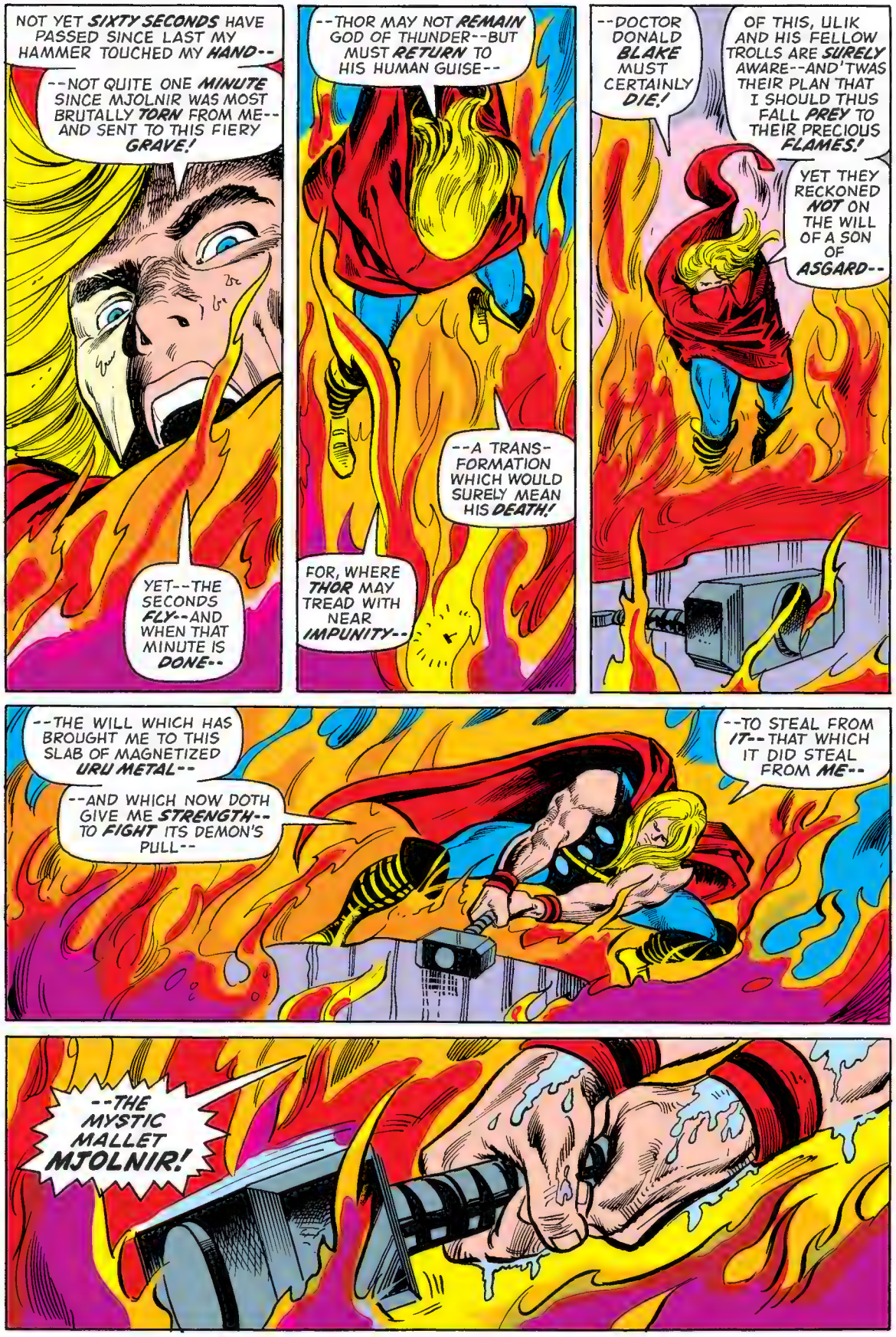
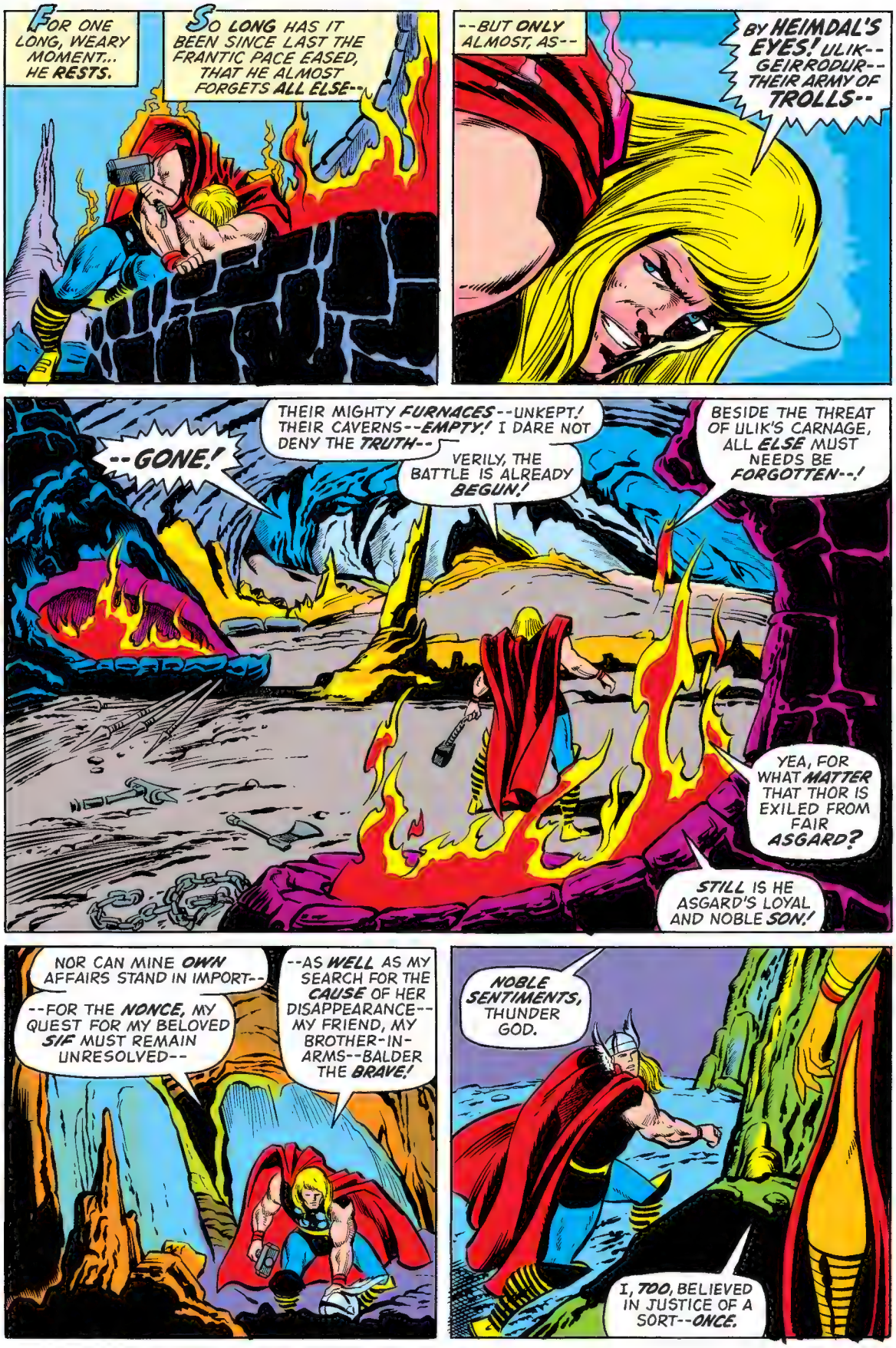
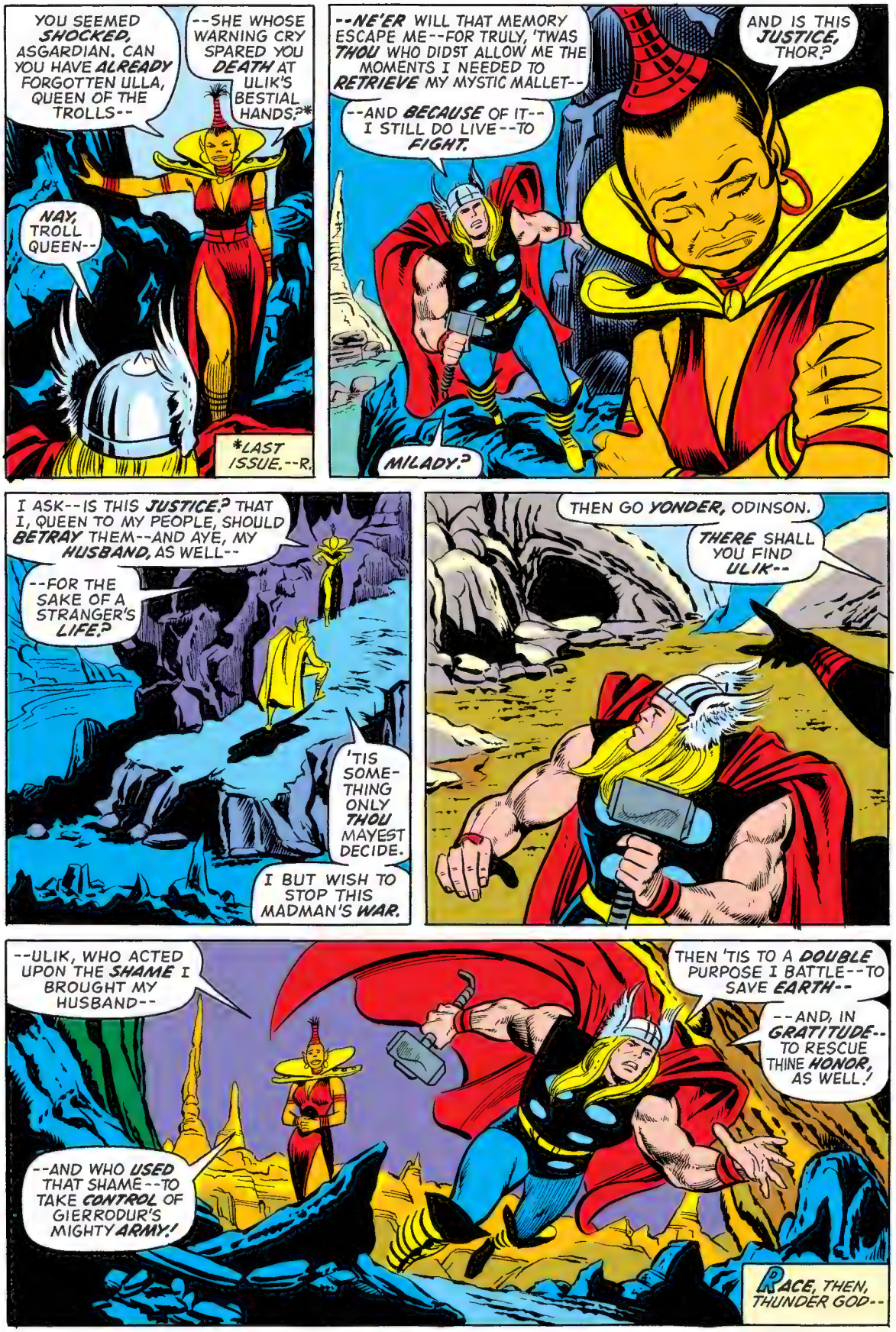
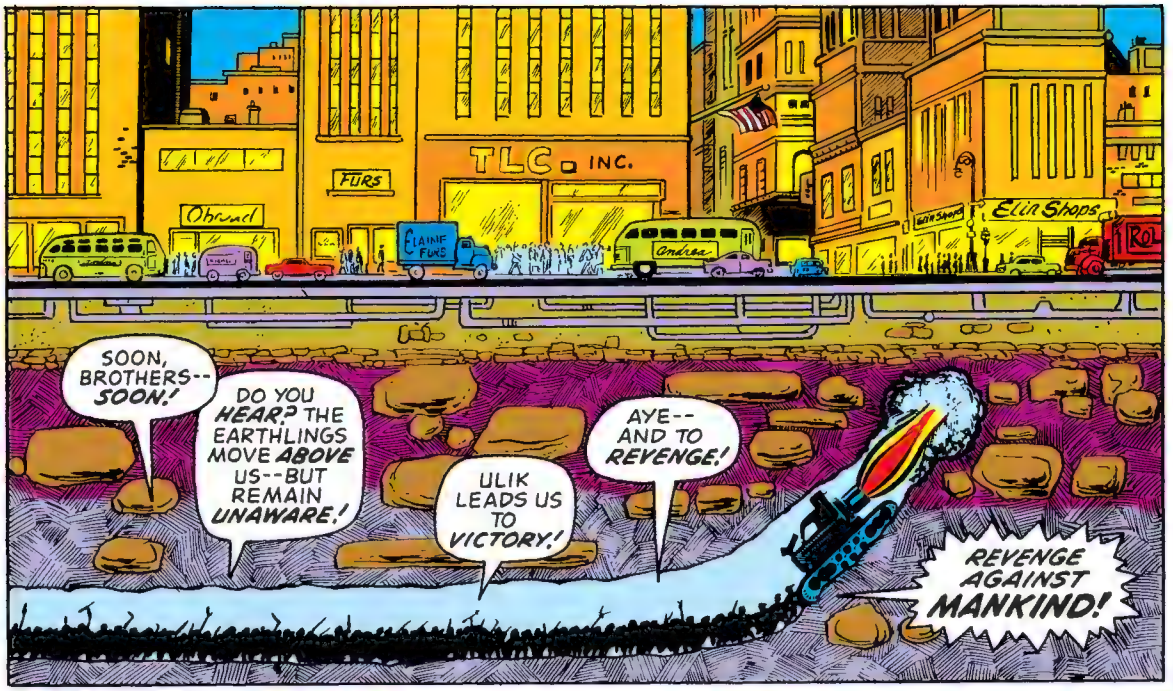

NOT YET SIXTY SECONDS HAVE PASSED SINCE LAST MY HAMMER TOUCHED MY HAND--
--NOT QUITE ONE MINUTE SINCE MJOLNIR WAS MOST BRUTALLY TORN FROM ME--AND SENT TO THIS FIERY GRAVE!
YET--THE SECONDS FLY--AND WHEN THAT MINUTE IS DONE--
--THOR MAY NOT REMAIN GOD OF THUNDER--BUT MUST RETURN TO HIS HUMAN GUISE--
--A TRANS-FORMATION WHICH WOULD SURELY MEAN HIS DEATH!
FOR, WHERE THOR MAY TREAD WITH NEAR IMPUNITY--
--DOCTOR DONALD BLAKE MUST CERTAINLY DIE!
OF THIS, ULIK AND HIS FELLOW TROLLS ARE SURELY AWARE--AND'TWAS THEIR PLAN THAT I SHOULD THUS FALL PREY TO THEIR PRECIOUS FLAMES!
YET THEY RECKONED NOT ON THE WILL OF A SON OF ASGARD--
--THE WILL WHICH HAS BROUGHT ME TO THIS SLAB OF MAGNETIZED URU METAL--
--AND WHICH NOW DOTH GIVE ME STRENGTH--TO FIGHT ITS DEMON'S PULL--
--TO STEAL FROM IT--THAT WHICH IT DID STEAL FROM ME--
--THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR!

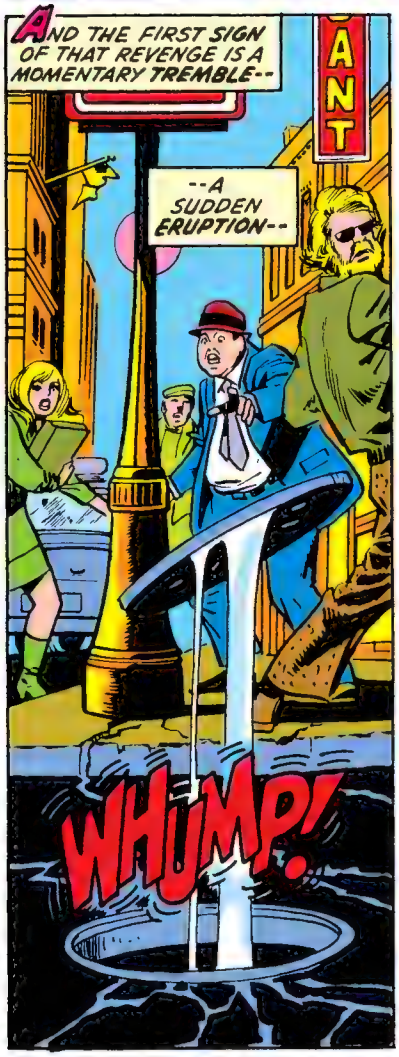
DONE--AND YEA, NOT AN INSTANT TOO SOON!
NOW MAY I RETURN TO THE CAVERNS ABOVE--AND THERE FACE ULIK'S DARK LEGIONS--
--AND PERHAPS LEARN MEANING AND METHOD BEHIND THIS MAD ATTACK--
--THOUGH METHINKS THE REASON IS ALREADY CLEAR!
LONG HAS ULIK SUFFERED THE YOKE OF ASGARD--LONG HAS GIERRODUR, THE RAGING KING OF THE TROLLS, SOUGHT A WAY TO CRUSH BOTH ASGARD ABOVE--
--AND MIDGARD BELOW!
FAIR MIDGARD--FAIR EARTH--I DO FEAR THY PEACEFUL HOURS ART TRULY NUMBERED.
VERILY, WHEN ULIK DOTH BRING HIS FORCES AGAINST THEE--
--THOU SHALT FIND ALL OTHER WARS PALE IN SIGNIFICANCE!
O MANKIND --I DO PITY THEE--
--THOU ART BUT CHILDREN IN THE WAYS OF WARFARE--
--CHILDREN--WHOSE GREATEST BATTLE-- IS ONLY BEGUN!

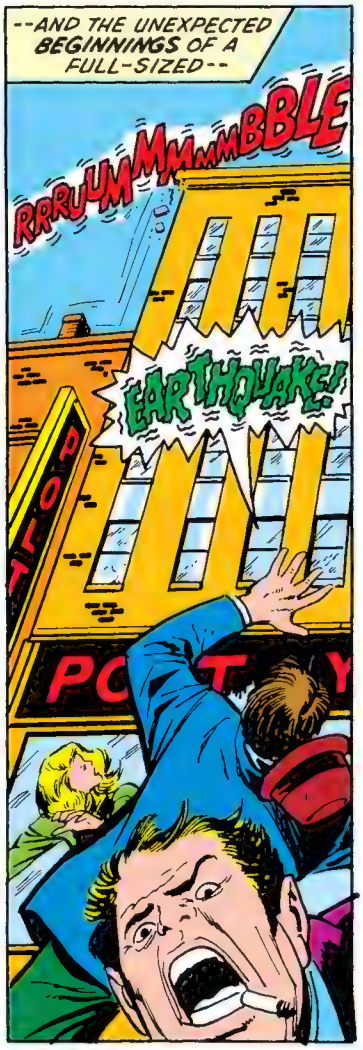

FOR ONE LONG, WEARY MOMENT... HE RESTS.
SO LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE LAST THE FRANTIC PACE EASED, THAT HE ALMOST FORGETS ALL ELSE--
--BUT ONLY ALMOST, AS--
BY HEIMDAL'S EYES! ULIK--GEIRRODUR--THEIR ARMY OF TROLLS--
--GONE!
THEIR MIGHTY FURNACES--UNKEPT! THEIR CAVERNS--EMPTY! I DARE NOT DENY THE TRUTH--
VERILY, THE BATTLE IS ALREADY BEGUN!
BESIDE THE THREAT OF ULIK'S CARNAGE, ALL ELSE MUST NEEDS BE FORGOTTEN--!
YEA, FOR WHAT MATTER THAT THOR IS EXILED FROM FAIR ASGARD?
STILL IS HE ASGARD'S LOYAL AND NOBLE SON!
NOR CAN MINE OWN AFFAIRS STAND IN IMPORT--
--FOR THE NONCE, MY QUEST FOR MY BELOVED SIF MUST REMAIN UNRESOLVED--
--AS WELL AS MY SEARCH FOR THE CAUSE OF HER DISAPPEARANCE--MY FRIEND, MY BROTHER-IN-ARMS--BALDER THE BRAVE!
NOBLE SENTIMENTS, THUNDER GOD.
I, TOO, BELIEVED IN JUSTICE OF A SORT--ONCE.

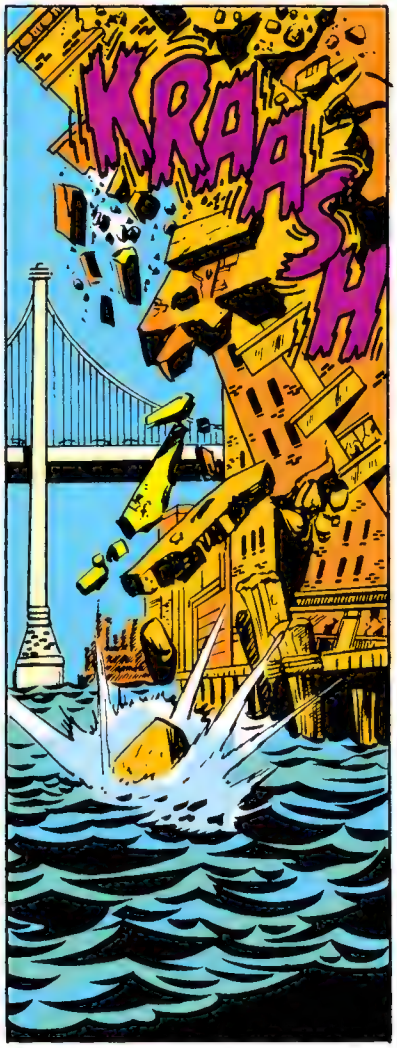

YOU SEEMED SHOCKED, ASGARDIAN. CAN YOU HAVE ALREADY FORGOTTEN ULLA, QUEEN OF THE TROLLS--
--SHE WHOSE WARNING CRY SPARED YOU DEATH AT ULIK'S BESTIAL HANDS?*
NAY, TROLL QUEEN--
*LAST ISSUE.--R.
--NE'ER WILL THAT MEMORY ESCAPE ME--FOR TRULY, 'TWAS THOU WHO DIDST ALLOW ME THE MOMENTS I NEEDED TO RETRIEVE MY MYSTIC MALLET--
--AND BECAUSE OF IT--I STILL DO LIVE--TO FIGHT.
AND IS THIS JUSTICE, THOR?
MILADY?
I ASK--IS THIS JUSTICE? THAT I, QUEEN TO MY PEOPLE, SHOULD BETRAY THEM--AND AYE, MY HUSBAND, AS WELL--
--FOR THE SAKE OF A STRANGER'S LIFE?
'TIS SOMETHING ONLY THOU MAYEST DECIDE.
I BUT WISH TO STOP THIS MADMAN'S WAR.
THEN GO YONDER, ODINSON.
THERE SHALL YOU FIND ULIK--
--ULIK, WHO ACTED UPON THE SHAME I BROUGHT MY HUSBAND--
--AND WHO USED THAT SHAME--TO TAKE CONTROL OF GIERRODUR'S MIGHTY ARMY!
THEN 'TIS TO A DOUBLE PURPOSE I BATTLE--TO SAVE EARTH--
--AND, IN GRATITUDE--TO RESCUE THINE HONOR, AS WELL!
RACE, THEN, THUNDER GOD--

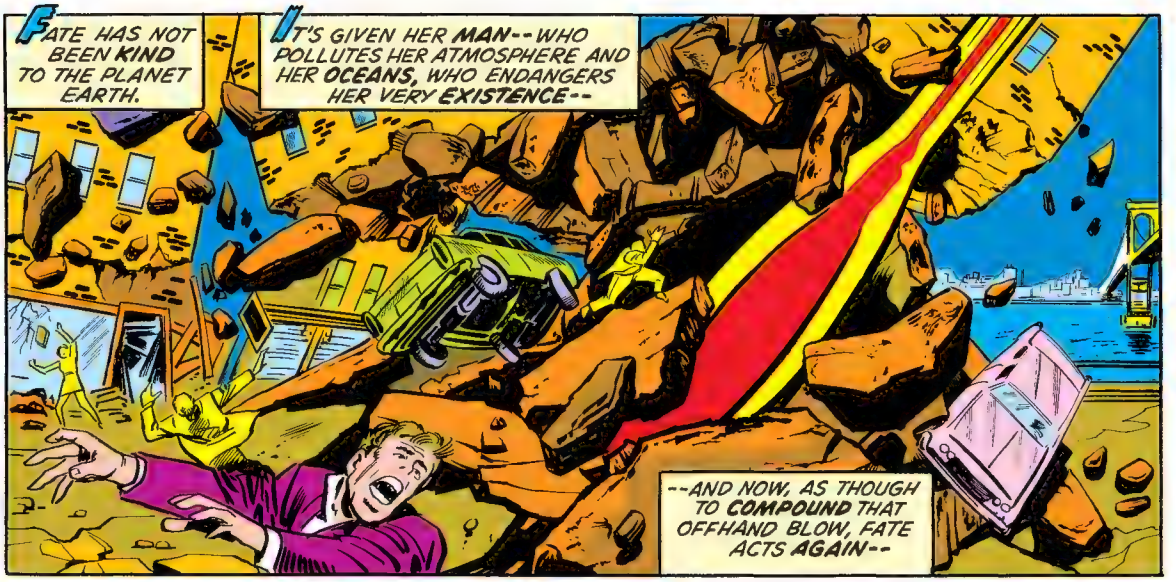
--FOR 'TIS A RACE THAT WILL TRULY NEED WINNING!
EVEN AS YOUR FEET POUND THE NEWLY-TURNED DIRT IN A DARKENED TUNNEL, THE TROLL NAMED ULIK URGES HIS STOLEN LEGIONS ONWARD--
ONWARD, THROUGH THE MILES OF SWOLLEN CRUST--GRANITE AND SHALE CHURNING INTO DUST BEFORE THE ONSLAUGHT OF TROLLS' MASSIVE ENGINES--
REEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
ONWARD, TO THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH!
FORWARD, YOU FOOLS! FORWARD!
ULIK COMMANDS IT--ULIK THE INVINCIBLE!


TLC INC.
FURS
Elin Shops
SOON, BROTHERS-- SOON!
DO YOU HEAR? THE EARTHLINGS MOVE ABOVE US--BUT REMAIN UNAWARE!
ULIK LEADS US TO VICTORY!
AYE-- AND TO REVENGE!
REVENGE AGAINST MANKIND!


AND THE FIRST SIGN OF THAT REVENGE IS A MOMENTARY TREMBLE--
--A SUDDEN ERUPTION--
ANT
WHUMP!


--AND THE UNEXPECTED BEGINNINGS OF A FULL-SIZED--
RRRUMMMMMBBLE
EARTHQUAKE!


KRAAASH


FATE HAS NOT BEEN KIND TO THE PLANET EARTH.
IT'S GIVEN HER MAN--WHO POLLUTES HER ATMOSPHERE AND HER OCEANS, WHO ENDANGERS HER VERY EXISTENCE--
--AND NOW, AS THOUGH TO COMPOUND THAT OFFHAND BLOW, FATE ACTS AGAIN--

--AND GIVES HER ULIK, LEADER OF THE TROLLS!
VENGEANCE, BROTHERS!
VENGEANCE--FOR THOSE EONS LOST BENEATH THIS PLANET'S CRUST--
--FOR THE MILLENIUM WE SPENT HIDDEN FROM THE SUN--
--AND FROM OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE--AS MASTERS OF THE WORLD!
NOW, BROTHERS! STRIKE NOW--
--AND THE PLANET IS OURS!

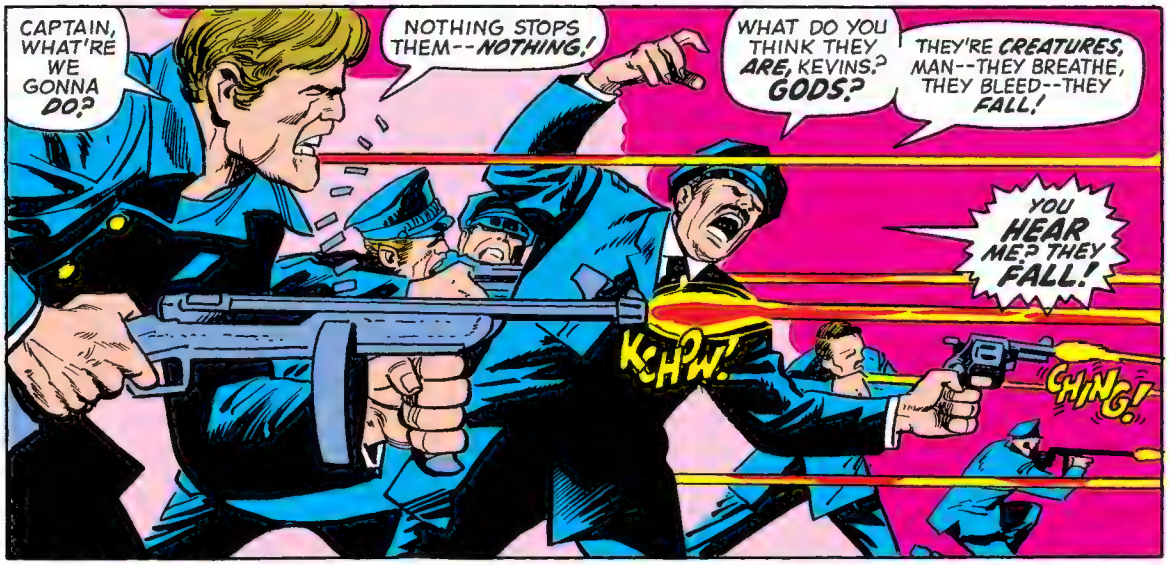
YET FAR FROM THE STRIDENT VOICES, SILENCE REIGNS--A WEIGHTY SILENCE NOW BROKEN BY A SOFT FOOTFALL, AND THE SOUND OF SHIFTING GRAVEL.
'TIS NO USE--THESE PASSAGES DO TWINE IN NO RATIONAL PATTERN.
I FEAR I HAVE LOST MY ORIGINAL PATH--

--AND IF I AM TO MEET THE CREATURE CALLED ULIK IN FINAL COMBAT, THEN I MUST FIND ANOTHER ROUTE--

KRAAAKK!
--AS ONLY THE GOD OF THUNDER CAN!
MINUTES FLY AS ROCK AND STONE SPIN FREE--
--SECONDS CHIPPED FROM SOME COSMIC MONUMENT--
--A MONUMENT TO THE GRIM DETERMINATION-- OF A CREATURE BOTH GOD-- AND MAN!
WHILE ELSEWHERE, TIME SEEMS TO MOVE MUCH MORE SLOWLY, AS...
U-SLYN... TYBORR... LEAVE ME.
I WOULD SPEAK ALONE... WITH MY QUEEN.
WOMAN, YOU HAVE DONE YOUR WORK WELL. ULIK HAS USURPED MY POWER...
...AND EVEN NOW, HE WIELDS THAT POWER IN ATTACK AGAINST THE SURFACE MEN IN THEIR CITY OF NEW YORK!
MY LORD-- PLEASE BELIEVE ME-- I NEVER THOUGHT--
SIRE, YOU WERE WARNED--THAT WOMAN IS FILLED WITH WITCHERY!
EVEN YOUR CHIEF CONSULAR SPOKE AGAINST HER--AND MUTHOS HAS NEVER PLAYED THE FOOL!
I SAID BEGONE!
I WILL SPEAK WITH MY WIFE-- ALONE!

BUT, AFTER THE CONSULORS HAVE QUIT THE KING'S PRIVATE CHAMBER...
DEAREST GIERRODUR... DOES IT FARE THAT BADLY?
FAR WORSE.
THE BATTLE ABOVE GOES WELL.
IF ULIK SHOULD WIN HIS HOLY CRUSADE--THEN ALL IS LOST.
MY KINGDOM IS FORFEIT--
--AS WELL AS OUR LIVES!
THEN HOLD ME, MY KING--AND PRAY, FORGIVE ME!
MILADY... I CAN DO LITTLE ELSE!
AND, ON THE SURFACE, THE UNDECLARED WAR CONTINUES--
THOUGH, IN FACT, ONLY THE FIRST FORAY HAS BEGUN!
MOVE UP THERE, MEN!
WE'VE PULLED SIX RIOT SQUADS IN FROM THE NEIGHBORING PRECINCTS--
IF YOU BOYS CAN'T HANDLE IT--NOTHING WILL!
P.D.N.Y.
POLICE
CAPTAIN--THAT'S JUST WHAT I'M AFRAID OF!
THE MINDLESS HUMANS! THEY SEEK TO DISPATCH US WITH STINGING SMOKE!
DO THEY THINK US CHILDREN--UNABLE TO CONTROL OUR TEARS?
WHUNT!
WHUMP!
PERHAPS THEY DO NOT YET UNDERSTAND WHAT FORCE THEY ARE FACING!
PERHAPS IT IS TIME THEY LEARNED!

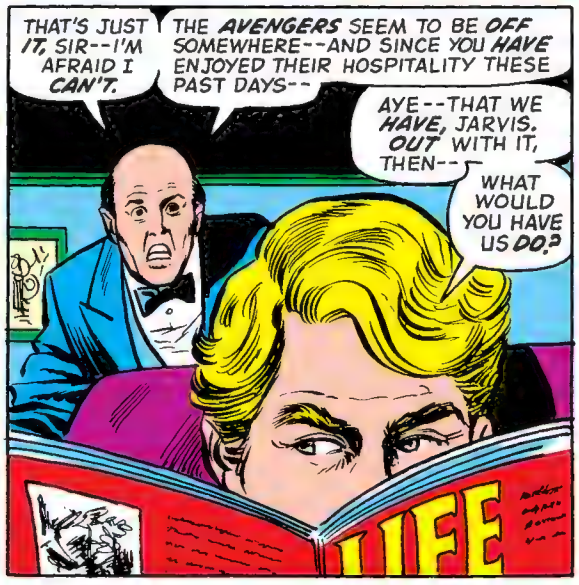
FOR MORE YEARS THAN HUMANS CAN RECALL, THE TROLLS HAVE STALKED BENEATH THEIR HALLOWED EARTH--
--AND NO HUMAN WEAPON CAN STRIKE SO STRAIGHT AND TRUE--
ALLIED VANS
--AS THE STRENGTH OF AN EARTH-DWELLER BORN!
THE STREETS OF MANHATTAN HAVE SEEN MANY KINDS OF WARFARE!
RIOTS, STRIKES, GANGS--THEY'VE EACH WRECKED THEIR OWN BRAND OF HAVOC--
KEVINS, JONES--GET BACK!
THAT AIN'T NO BLASTED MOVIE PROP--
THAT TRUCK'S FOR REAL!
--BUT NONE CAN COMPARE--TO THE WAR OF THE TROLLS!
KRUNCH!!
BROTHERS, THE MOMENT IS NOW!
PUSH--AND THE SURFACE WORLD IS OURS--
DESTINY IS OURS--NOW, AND FOR ALL ETERNITY!
ULIK SPEAKS--
--ULIK LEADS!


CAPTAIN, WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO?
NOTHING STOPS THEM--NOTHING!
WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY ARE, KEVINS? GODS?
THEY'RE CREATURES, MAN--THEY BREATHE, THEY BLEED--THEY FALL!
YOU HEAR ME? THEY FALL!
K-CHOW!
CHING!

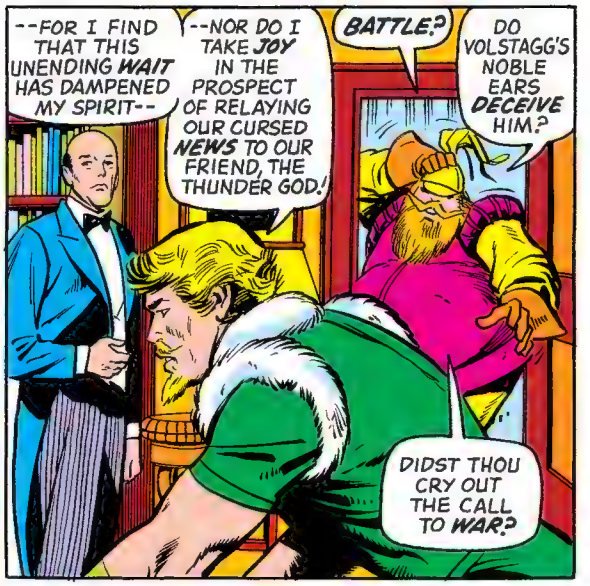
ULIK, THE HUMANS FIGHT LIKE CREATURES AFIRE!
EVEN THEY CAN DIE, TYG'R--THEY DROP AS WE DROP--
--THOUGH THEY WILL DROP FASTER--FOR THEY ARE ONLY HUMANS--
--WHILE WE ARE TROLLS!
ZAK!

CAPTAIN HAYES! THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH TO THIRTY-FOURTH STREET--
IT'S NO USE! WE CAN'T HOLD THEM BACK!
BLAK!
THEN CALL THE MAYOR!
BLAK!
GET OUT THE NATIONAL GUARD!
BLAK!

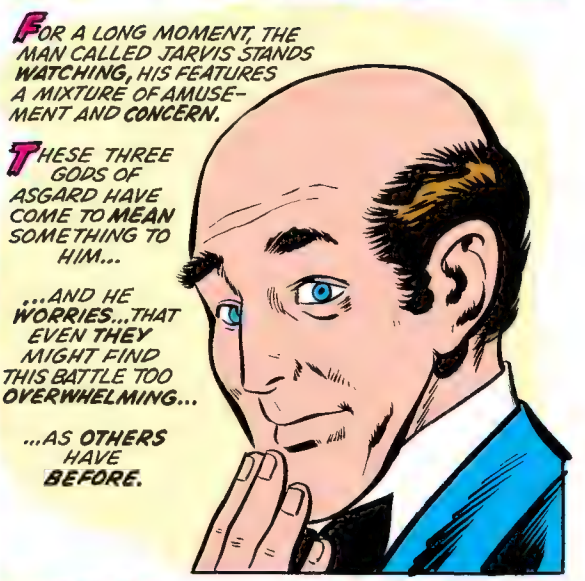
AT THAT INSTANT, SOME SIXTY BLOCKS UPTOWN--
MASTERS HOGUN AND FANDRAL! THERE SEEMS TO BE A BIT OF DIFFICULTY--!
WE'VE TROUBLE ENOUGH, FRIEND JARVIS.
TAKE THY DIFFICULTY ELSEWHERE.


THAT'S JUST IT, SIR--I'M AFRAID I CAN'T.
THE AVENGERS SEEM TO BE OFF SOMEWHERE--AND SINCE YOU HAVE ENJOYED THEIR HOSPITALITY THESE PAST DAYS--
AYE--THAT WE HAVE, JARVIS. OUT WITH IT, THEN--
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE US DO?
LIFE

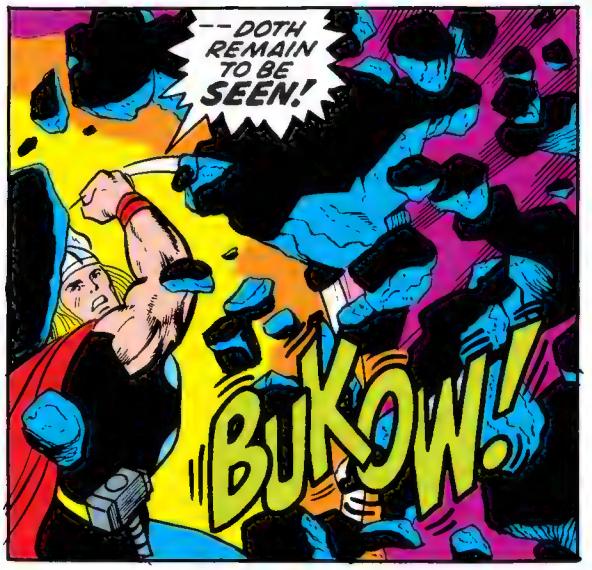
QUICKLY, THE QUIET-VOICED BUTLER EXPLAINS THE SITUATION HE'S JUST VIEWED ON THE AVENGER'S CLOSED-CIRCUIT MONITOR--AND WHEN HE'S FINISHED--
WE DO LITTLE OF WORTH HERE, FANDRAL--WAITING FOR THOR TO RETURN FROM HIS QUEST.
HOGUN FOR ONE WELCOMES THE STRAIN OF BATTLE.
AS DO I, FRIEND--


--FOR I FIND THAT THIS UNENDING WAIT HAS DAMPENED MY SPIRIT--
--NOR DO I TAKE JOY IN THE PROSPECT OF RELAYING OUR CURSED NEWS TO OUR FRIEND, THE THUNDER GOD!
BATTLE?
DO VOLSTAGG'S NOBLE EARS DECEIVE HIM?
DIDST THOU CRY OUT THE CALL TO WAR?

THAT WE DID, FAT ONE!
AND THOU SHALT BATTLE BESIDE US THIS TIME, GREAT MOUTH--
--NOT BEHIND US, AS E'ER BEFORE!
VERILY, THOU DOST INSULT ME!
VERILY, THOU ART A GREAT WEIGHT!


FOR A LONG MOMENT, THE MAN CALLED JARVIS STANDS WATCHING, HIS FEATURES A MIXTURE OF AMUSEMENT AND CONCERN.
THESE THREE GODS OF ASGARD HAVE COME TO MEAN SOMETHING TO HIM...
...AND HE WORRIES...THAT EVEN THEY MIGHT FIND THIS BATTLE TOO OVERWHELMING...
...AS OTHERS HAVE BEFORE.

AT LAST--I SENSE THAT I DO DRAW CLOSER TO THE PASSAGE I SEEK!
YEA, BEHIND THIS FINAL STONE--THERE LIES A HOLLOW--
WHETHER THE HOLLOW IS A TUNNEL--


--DOTH REMAIN TO BE SEEN!
BUKOW!

MAY THE FATES BE PRAISED.
ULIK'S PATH IS CLEAR--AND FROM THIS MOMENT--SO ALSO IS THOR'S!
YET, AS THOR STRIDES CLOSER TO THE BATTLE SITE--TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF OUR CAST, A CERTAIN SILAS GRANT AND A GIRL CALLED TANA NILE*, RETURN TO ACTIVE ROLES--
*LAST SEEN IN ISSUE #205.--R.T.
SILAS--DO YOU HEAR WHAT THAT MAN IS SAYING?
'TIS NO STORY, LASS--
IS IT TRUE--OR YET ANOTHER "DRAMA"--?
THOSE LADS LOOK MEAN.
"EARLY REPORTS INDICATE TOTAL CHAOS IN THE MIDTOWN AREA.
"THE UNIDENTIFIED CREATURES ADVANCE UNCHECKED--
"--THOUGH AT THE MOMENT--IF OUR CAMERAS ARE PICKING THIS UP CORRECTLY--
"--THEY ARE ABOUT TO BE COUNTERED--BY THE SO-CALLED THUNDER GOD--
"--THOR!"
HE'S BACK, LASS--AND 'TIS A CURSE HE CHOSE THIS DAY FOR A HOMECOMING!
ARE YOU COMING, TANA, GIRL?
YES, SILAS--
--THOUGH NOT IN THIS COMELY HUMAN FORM--
--BUT RATHER, IN THE SHAPE TO WHICH I WAS BORN--
--AND WHICH WILL SERVE ME BEST--

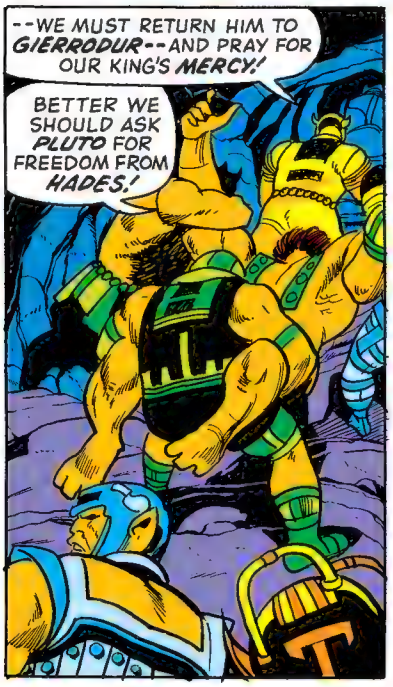
--THE SHAPE OF A RIGELLIAN COLONIZER!
IT IS A SHAPE I HAVE NOT HELD SINCE WE WERE FIRST MAROONED ON EARTH--
"--AND I WELCOME ITS RETURN--MORE THAN YOU CAN EVER KNOW!"
WHILE SEVERAL DOZEN BLOCKS DISTANT--THOR HAS ALREADY BEGUN THE ATTACK--
SWAK
--AND THOUGH AT FIRST HE SEEMS TRULY OUT-NUMBERED--
--STILL IS HE THOR, THE BLOOD-SON OF ODIN!
ULIK!
TURN AND FACE ME, TROLL--THY WAR DOTH MOVE TO AN END!
YOU!
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU SURVIVED, BLONDHAIR--BUT THIS I PROMISE YOU--
--THOU WILT--EH?
LAK!
FIRE AGAIN, FOOL!
ULIK WILL BE PLEASED IF WE DESTROY THE ASGARDIAN--NOW!

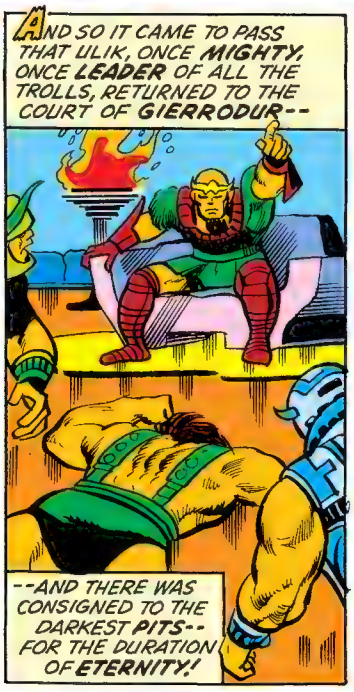
VILLAINS! THOU WOULDST ATTACK A MAN FROM BEHIND?
BUT ONE LANGUAGE DO THEY SPEAK, FANDRAL--
--A LANGUAGE HOGUN DOTH UNDERSTAND-- TOO WELL!
SP.
TANG!
FANDRAL! HOGUN! HOLD THOSE DEMONS AT BAY--
--WHILST I DO SEEK TO UNDO THE DAMAGE THEIR MISS-AIMED BOLT HATH WROUGHT!
GOOD LORD--WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THE ENTIRE BUILDING--
IT'S TILTING-- TOPPLING OVER!
FAR BELOW THE FRIGHTENED CRIES, A FIGURE STRAINS-- MUSCLES RIPPLING IN STEEL-LIKE BANDS ACROSS A BROAD BACK--
FOR A MOMENT, THE STRUCTURE TOTTERS, AND THEN--
RELEASE IT, YOU FOOL!
YOUR STRENGTH IS WANING-- ALREADY, YOU WEAKEN!
THEN I SHALL FALL...
YEA, FALL... RATHER THAN SURRENDER... TO THEE.
YOU ARE A FOOL, THUNDER GOD--
--AND SOON-- A DEAD FOOL!
STAY FIRM, MILORD!
WE'LL HOLD THIS DEMON!

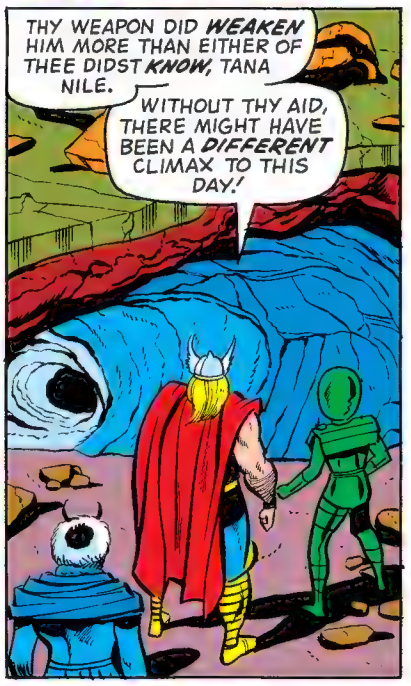
METHINKS THOU DOST SPEAK TOO QUICKLY, FRIEND FANDRAL.
THE YELLOW-MANED ONE KNOWS HIS FOE, DOLT--
--WHEREAS IT SEEMS THAT YOU--
--DO NOT!
THERE, LASS--AND THEY'RE HAVIN' QUITE A TIME OF IT, TOO!
THINK YOU CAN LEND THEM A BIT OF AID WITH THAT TOY OF YOURS?
IT IS NO TOY, SILAS GRANT.
THE RIGELLIAN STASIS GUN IS ONE OF THE MOST POTENT WEAPONS IN THE CIVILIZED GALAXY!
FOOM!
POTENT IT MAY BE, LASS--
--BUT PERHAPS 'TIS NOT QUITE POTENT ENOUGH!
IT--IT ISN'T POSSIBLE!
NO CREATURE ALIVE CAN WITHSTAND THE STASIS EFFECT!
THOU DOST FORGET, TANA NILE--THY WEAPON WAS DESIGNED FOR BEINGS NATURAL--
AND THE MONSTER CALLED ULIK IS BEYOND SUCH MORTAL DEFINITIONS!
IN A MOMENT, THIS BUILDING WILL BE STEADIED--

--AND THEN MUST ULIK FACE THE FORCE AND FURY--OF THE ONLY SON OF ODIN--THOR!
ZACH!
TURN, DEMON--TURN AND MEET MY ANGER!
TURN--AND MEET THE RAGE OF AN ASGARDIAN BORN!
ZACH!
I SAY THEE, CREATURE --TURN!
ARROGANT PUP! DO YOU REALIZE WHO I AM?
I AM ULIK! ULIK, THE INVINCIBLE!
ULIK, THE UNCONTROLL-- UNNNNH!
WHUMP!
WHAK!
CHUMP!
BAKOOK!

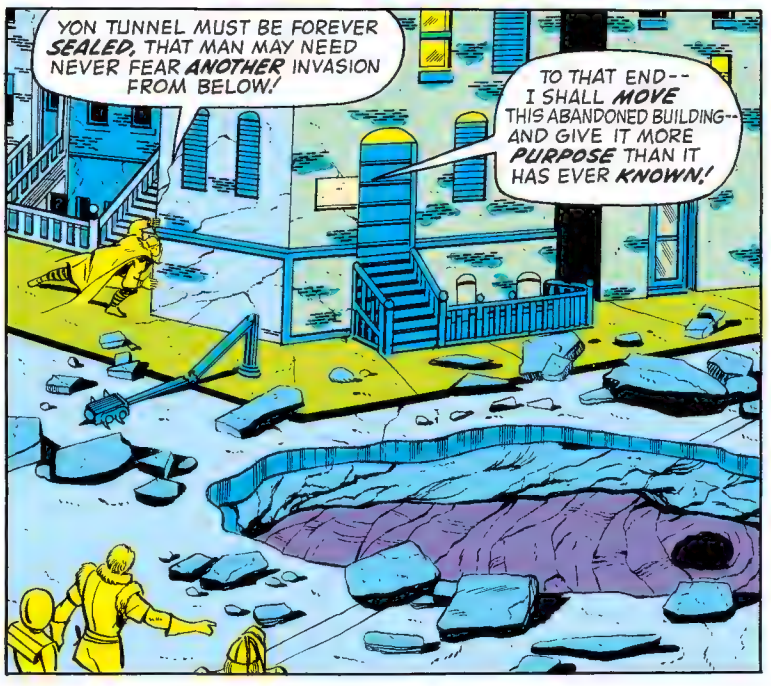
BY SURTUR'S FLAMES... ULIK HAS FALLEN!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
WITHOUT ULIK...WE ARE NOTHING!
WE HAVE ONLY ONE CHOICE--

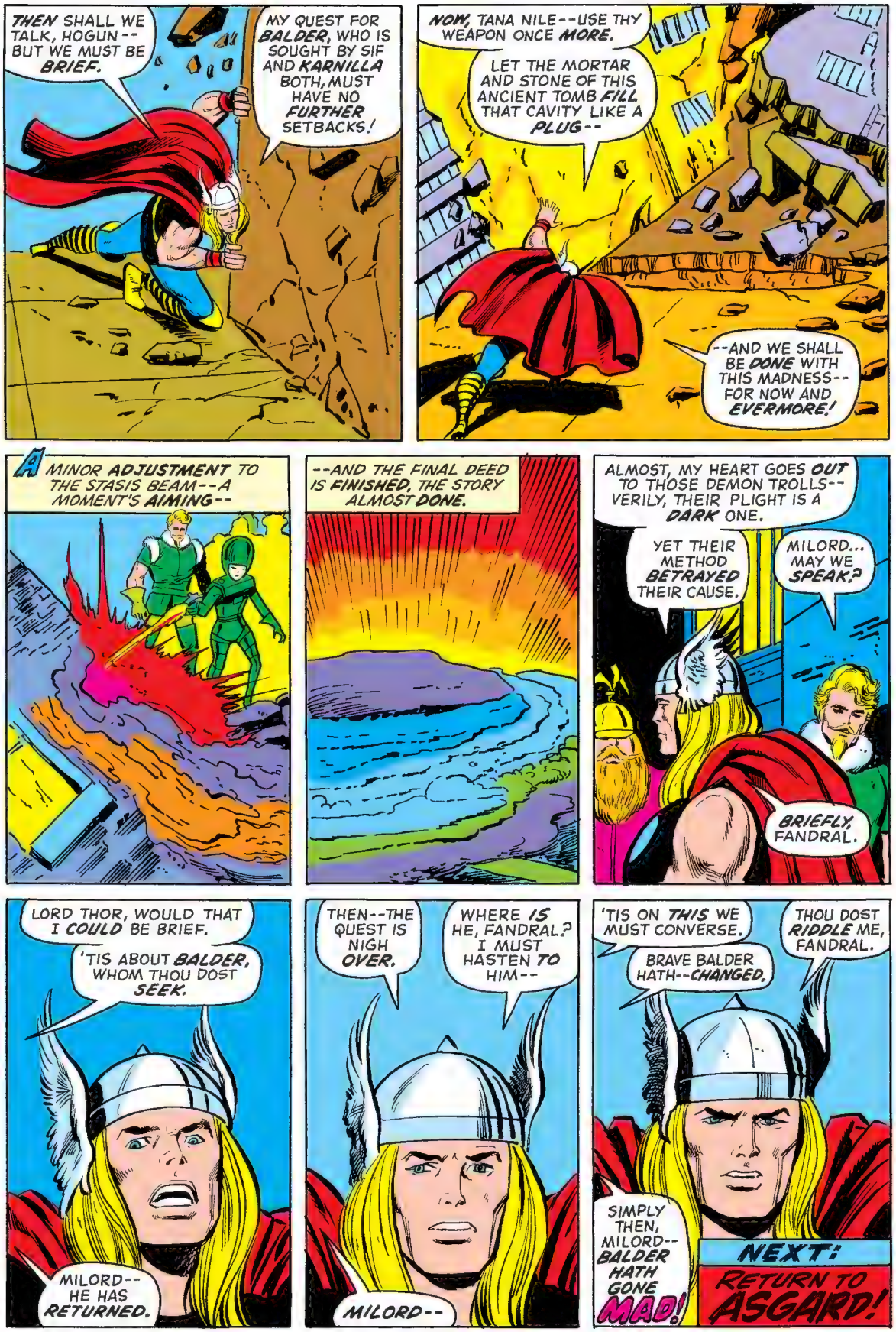

--WE MUST RETURN HIM TO GIERRODUR--AND PRAY FOR OUR KING'S MERCY!
BETTER WE SHOULD ASK PLUTO FOR FREEDOM FROM HADES!


AND SO IT CAME TO PASS THAT ULIK, ONCE MIGHTY, ONCE LEADER OF ALL THE TROLLS, RETURNED TO THE COURT OF GIERRODUR--
--AND THERE WAS CONSIGNED TO THE DARKEST PITS-- FOR THE DURATION OF ETERNITY!


THY WEAPON DID WEAKEN HIM MORE THAN EITHER OF THEE DIDST KNOW, TANA NILE.
WITHOUT THY AID, THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A DIFFERENT CLIMAX TO THIS DAY!

MILORD, THERE IS SOMETHING UPON WHICH WE MUST SPEAK--
IN A MOMENT, FRIEND HOGUN.
FOR NOW, THERE IS A CONCERN OF FAR MORE IMPORT IMPENDING.


YON TUNNEL MUST BE FOREVER SEALED, THAT MAN MAY NEED NEVER FEAR ANOTHER INVASION FROM BELOW!
TO THAT END-- I SHALL MOVE THIS ABANDONED BUILDING-- AND GIVE IT MORE PURPOSE THAN IT HAS EVER KNOWN!


THEN SHALL WE TALK, HOGUN -- BUT WE MUST BE BRIEF.
MY QUEST FOR BALDER, WHO IS SOUGHT BY SIF AND KARNILLA BOTH, MUST HAVE NO FURTHER SETBACKS!
NOW, TANA NILE--USE THY WEAPON ONCE MORE.
LET THE MORTAR AND STONE OF THIS ANCIENT TOMB FILL THAT CAVITY LIKE A PLUG--
--AND WE SHALL BE DONE WITH THIS MADNESS-- FOR NOW AND EVERMORE!
A MINOR ADJUSTMENT TO THE STASIS BEAM--A MOMENT'S AIMING--
--AND THE FINAL DEED IS FINISHED, THE STORY ALMOST DONE.
ALMOST, MY HEART GOES OUT TO THOSE DEMON TROLLS-- VERILY, THEIR PLIGHT IS A DARK ONE.
YET THEIR METHOD BETRAYED THEIR CAUSE.
MILORD... MAY WE SPEAK?
BRIEFLY, FANDRAL.
LORD THOR, WOULD THAT I COULD BE BRIEF.
'TIS ABOUT BALDER, WHOM THOU DOST SEEK.
MILORD-- HE HAS RETURNED.
THEN--THE QUEST IS NIGH OVER.
WHERE IS HE, FANDRAL? I MUST HASTEN TO HIM--
MILORD--
'TIS ON THIS WE MUST CONVERSE.
THOU DOST RIDDLE ME, FANDRAL.
BRAVE BALDER HATH--CHANGED.
SIMPLY THEN, MILORD-- BALDER HATH GONE MAD!
NEXT!
RETURN TO ASGARD!

THOR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
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212
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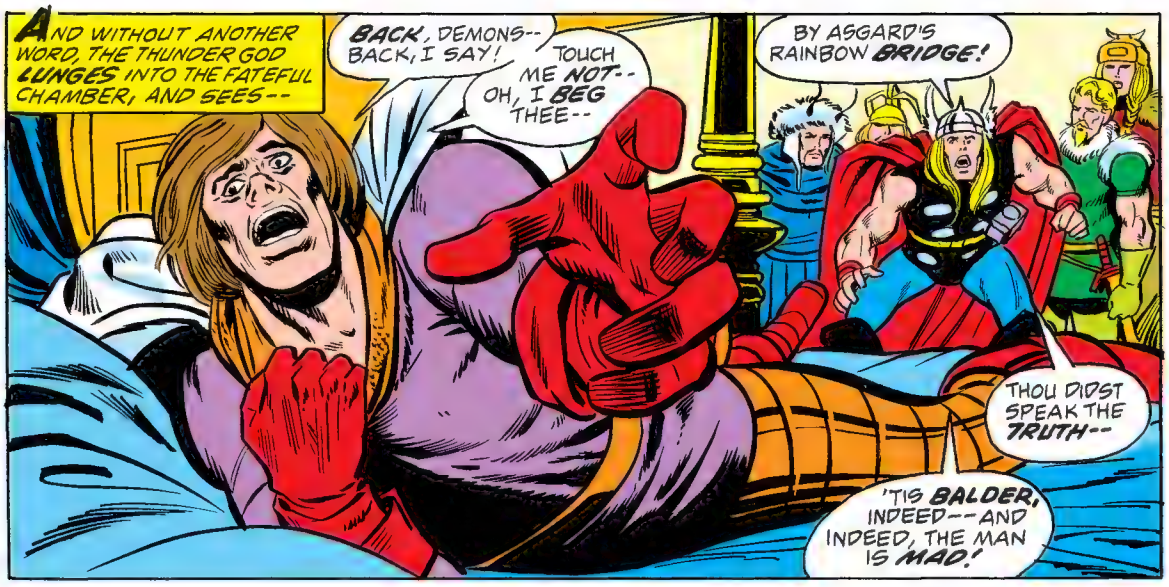
02450
THE MIGHTY
THOR
HEAR YE! HEAR YE!
WHAT AM I BID FOR THIS FINE SPECIMEN OF GODHOOD?
YOUR LIFE, LIZARD-MAN-- FOR HIS!
THE SECRET OF SSSTHGAR!

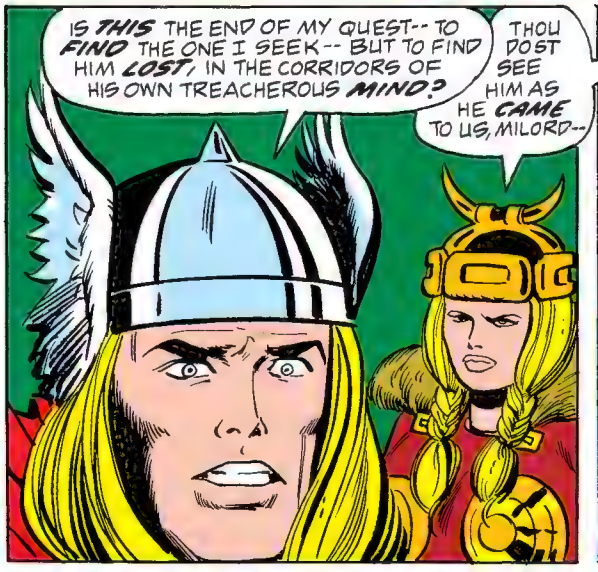
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

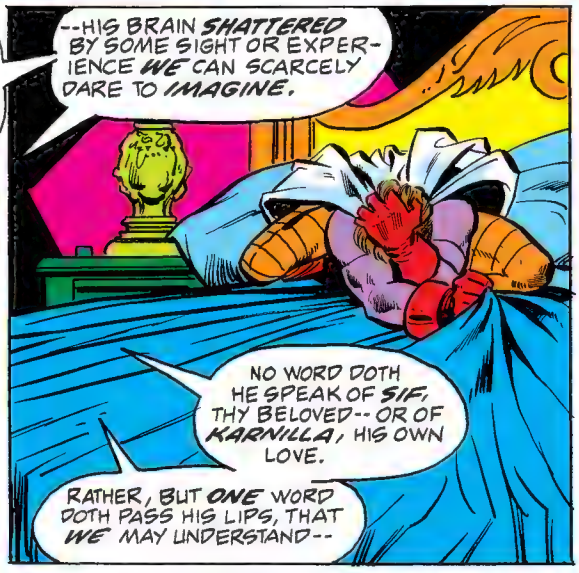
GERRY CONWAY SCRIPTER	JOHN BUSCEMA and DON PERLIN ARTISTS	VINNIE COLLETTA INKER	D.VLADIMER, LETTERER S.GOLDBERG, COLORIST	ROY THOMAS EDITOR

JOURNEY TO THE GOLDEN STAR!

MILORD THOR-- THOU MUST NOT ENTER!
RRIPPP!
PLEASE, MY LORD-- THE SIGHT IS TOO PAINFUL FOR MERE IMMORTAL EYES TO BEAR!
CRUNCH!
BEGONE, BOTH OF THEE! I AM THE SACRED SON OF ODIN--
--AND NONE MAY SAY ME NAY!
1351 Z

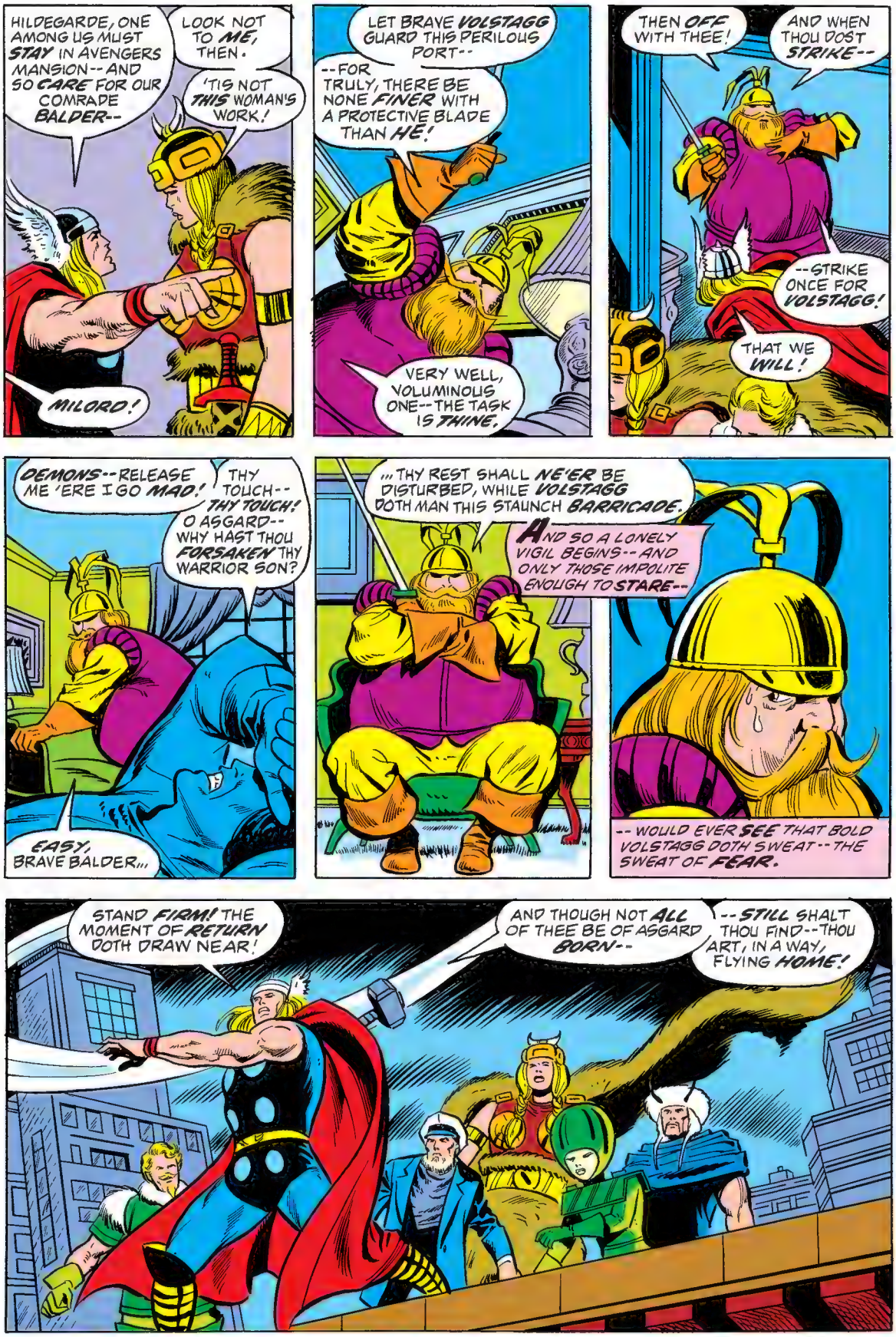

AND WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, THE THUNDER GOD LUNGES INTO THE FATEFUL CHAMBER, AND SEES--
BACK, DEMONS-- BACK, I SAY!
TOUCH ME NOT-- OH, I BEG THEE--
BY ASGARD'S RAINBOW BRIDGE!
THOU DIDST SPEAK THE TRUTH--
'TIS BALDER, INDEED--AND INDEED, THE MAN IS MAD!

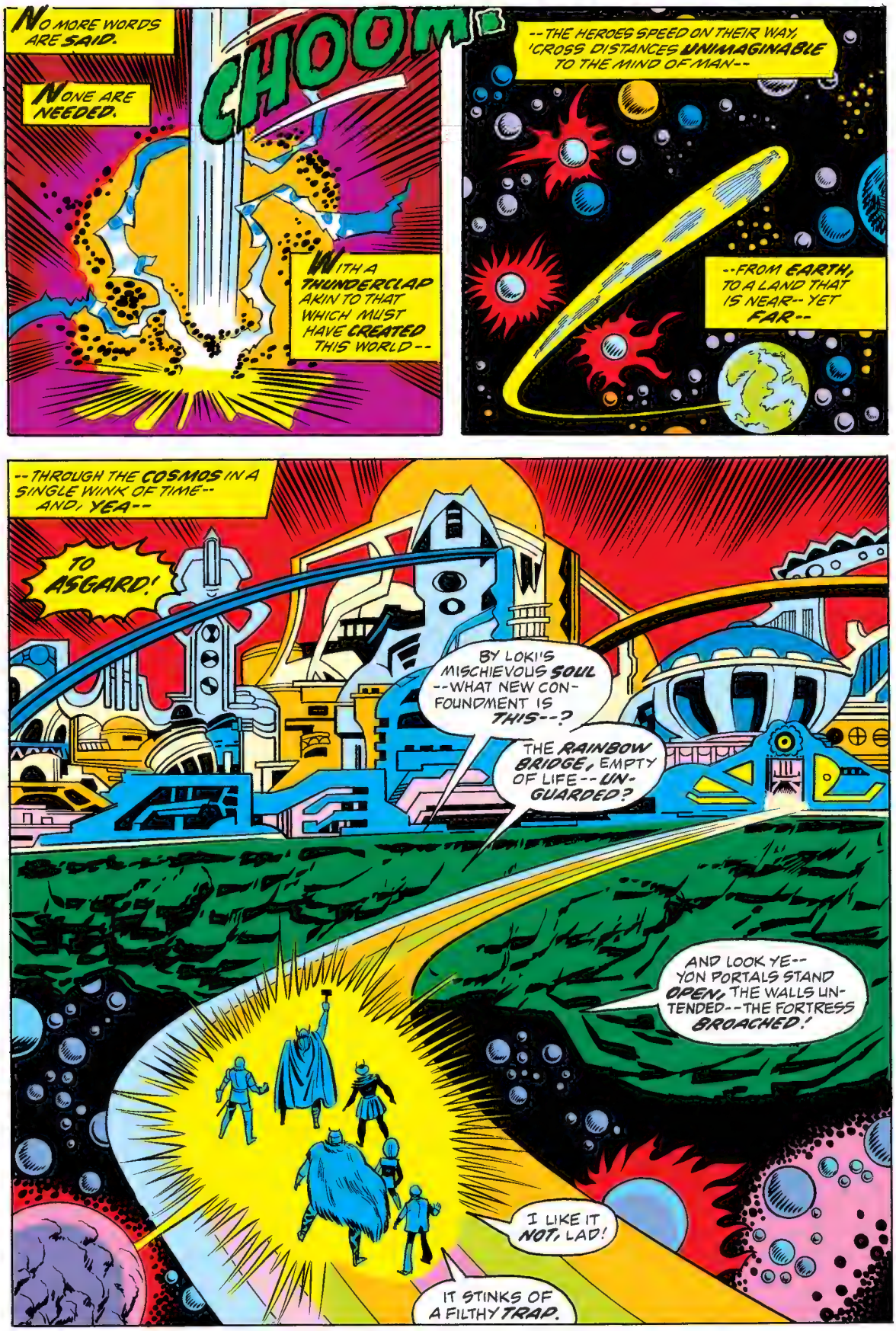

IS THIS THE END OF MY QUEST-- TO FIND THE ONE I SEEK-- BUT TO FIND HIM LOST, IN THE CORRIDORS OF HIS OWN TREACHEROUS MIND?
THOU DOST SEE HIM AS HE CAME TO US, MILORD--


--HIS BRAIN SHATTERED BY SOME SIGHT OR EXPERIENCE WE CAN SCARCELY DARE TO IMAGINE.
NO WORD DOTH HE SPEAK OF SIF, THY BELOVED-- OR OF KARNILLA, HIS OWN LOVE.
RATHER, BUT ONE WORD DOTH PASS HIS LIPS, THAT WE MAY UNDERSTAND--

"ASGARD!"
ALWAYS THIS-- NOTHING MORE.
MILORD-- DOST THOU THINK?
--THAT IT MAY BE ODIN'S DOING? YEA... PERHAPS.

FOR-- DID NOT MY FATHER EXILE US WARRIORS OF ASGARD TO THIS PLANET EARTH?
AND DID HE NOT ORDAIN --THAT ANY WHO SHOULD BRAVE ASGARD'S GATES WOULD FIND HIMSELF CONDEMNED?
YEA, METHINKS THIS IS MY FATHER'S WORK-- AND FOR IT SHALL HE PAY!

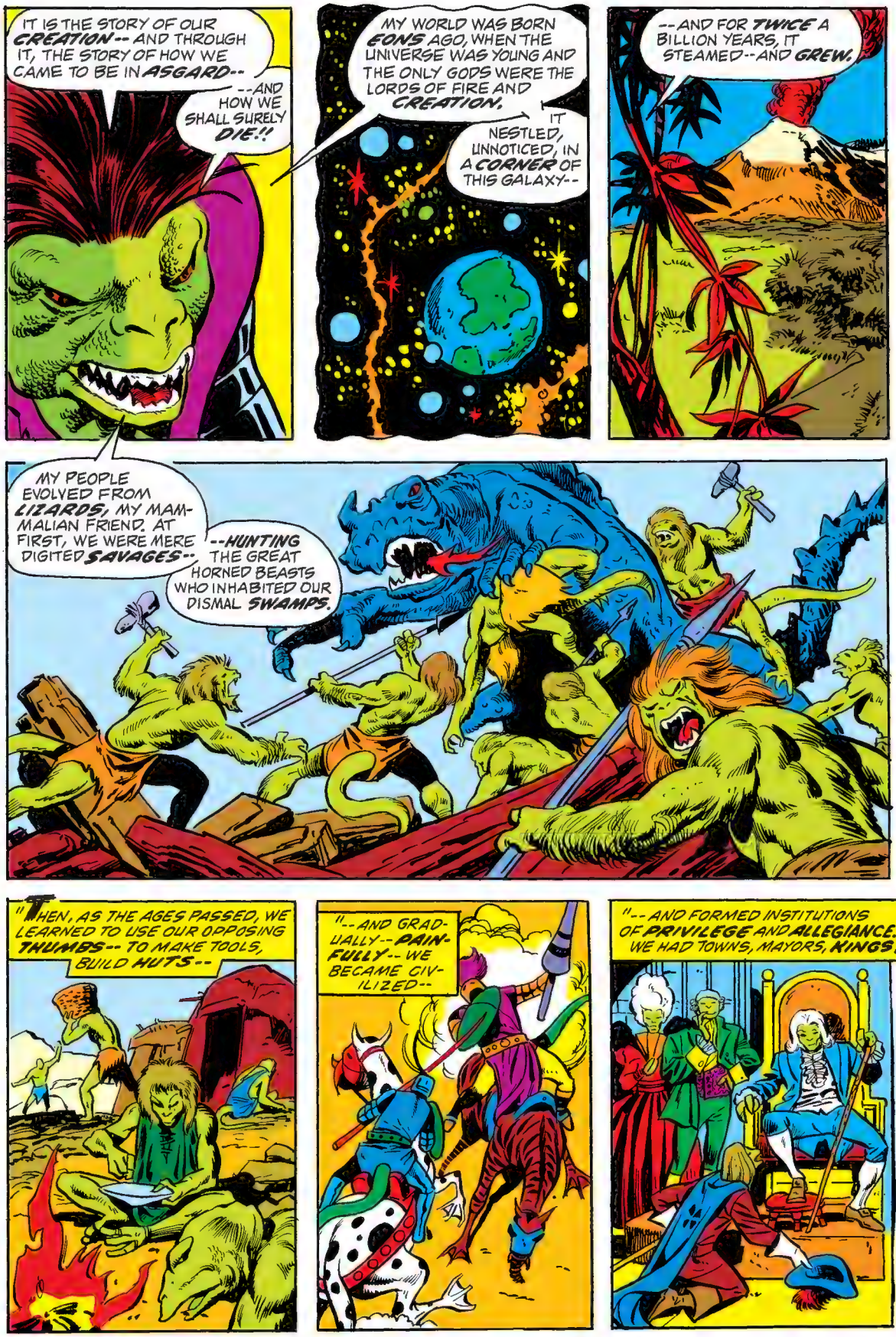

HILDEGARDE, ONE AMONG US MUST STAY IN AVENGERS MANSION--AND SO CARE FOR OUR COMRADE BALDER--
LOOK NOT TO ME, THEN.
'TIS NOT THIS WOMAN'S WORK!
MILORD!
LET BRAVE VOLSTAGG GUARD THIS PERILOUS PORT--
--FOR TRULY, THERE BE NONE FINER WITH A PROTECTIVE BLADE THAN HE!
VERY WELL, VOLUMINOUS ONE--THE TASK IS THINE.
THEN OFF WITH THEE!
AND WHEN THOU DOST STRIKE--
--STRIKE ONCE FOR VOLSTAGG!
THAT WE WILL!
DEMONS--RELEASE ME 'ERE I GO MAD!
THY TOUCH--THY TOUCH!
O ASGARD--WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN THY WARRIOR SON?
EASY, BRAVE BALDER...
...THY REST SHALL NE'ER BE DISTURBED, WHILE VOLSTAGG DOTH MAN THIS STAUNCH BARRICADE.
AND SO A LONELY VIGIL BEGINS--AND ONLY THOSE IMPOLITE ENOUGH TO STARE--
--WOULD EVER SEE THAT BOLD VOLSTAGG DOTH SWEAT--THE SWEAT OF FEAR.
STAND FIRM! THE MOMENT OF RETURN DOTH DRAW NEAR!
AND THOUGH NOT ALL OF THEE BE OF ASGARD BORN--
--STILL SHALT THOU FIND--THOU ART, IN A WAY, FLYING HOME!


NO MORE WORDS ARE SAID.
NONE ARE NEEDED.
CHOOM
WITH A THUNDERCLAP AKIN TO THAT WHICH MUST HAVE CREATED THIS WORLD--
--THE HEROES SPEED ON THEIR WAY, 'CROSS DISTANCES UNIMAGINABLE TO THE MIND OF MAN--
--FROM EARTH, TO A LAND THAT IS NEAR--YET FAR--
--THROUGH THE COSMOS IN A SINGLE WINK OF TIME--AND, YEA--
TO ASGARD!
BY LOKI'S MISCHIEVOUS SOUL --WHAT NEW CONFOUNDMENT IS THIS--?
THE RAINBOW BRIDGE, EMPTY OF LIFE--UNGUARDED?
AND LOOK YE--YON PORTALS STAND OPEN, THE WALLS UNTENDED--THE FORTRESS BROACHED!
I LIKE IT NOT, LAD!
IT STINKS OF A FILTHY TRAP.

THAT IT DOTH INDEED, SILAS GRANT... AND YET, I CANNOT BELIEVE 'TIS SO.
LISTEN. THE STREETS DO RING WITH OUR FOOTSTEPS-- HOLLOW WITH THE SOUND OF A TOMB.
IF 'TIS A TRAP, 'TIS NOT OF MY FATHER'S MAKING.
CANST THOU BE SO SURE, MILORD?
TRUE, 'TIS NOT ODIN'S WAY TO ACT SO--SURREPTITIOUSLY.
STILL...
SAINTS ABOVE!
HISSSSSSSS
LOOK OUT, LASS--BEHIND YE!
ODIN'S BLOOD!
SSITHHH
VERMIN!
ASGARD'S STREETS HAVE RUN FOUL--
--THAT THOU MAYEST WALK THE CITY, FREE!
HISSSSSSS
HILDE-GARDE, NAY!
THE CREATURE MAY KNOW WHAT MYSTERY DOTH LURK WITHIN THESE DARKENED STREETS! WE MUST--
CHUNK

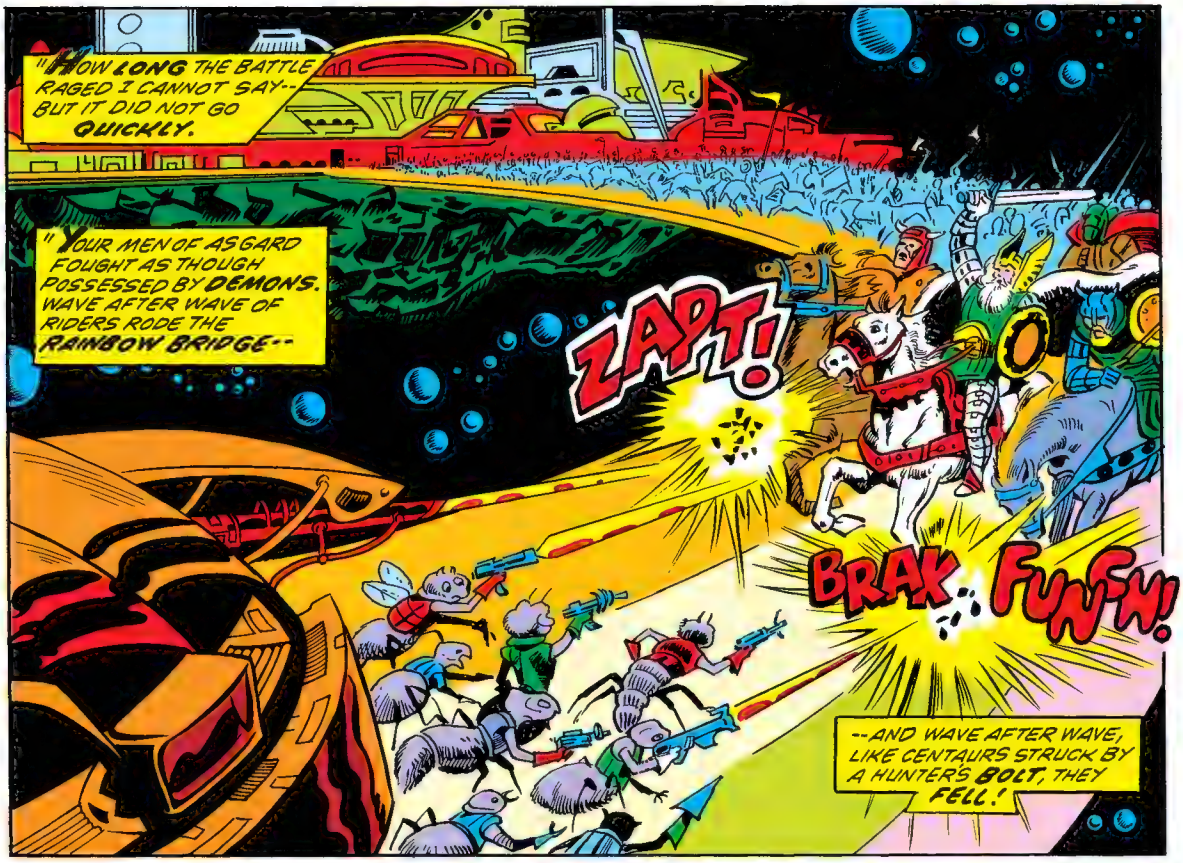
MY LORD THOR! NEVER DID I INTEND HIM TO STRIKE SO HARD--!
IF I'D BUT KNOWN--
TFFFFTTTTT!
THY WORDS ARE USELESS NOW, HILDEGARDE.
WHATE'ER MANNER OF CREATURE 'TWAS --'TIS CREATURE NO LONGER.
MILORD, IT DOTH STAGGER THE MIND.
WHERE ONCE BEING DID LIE-- ASHES NOW REST!
GONE--AND WITH HIM, THE ANSWER--!
NO!
NOT QUITE, ASGARDIAN-- IF SUCH YOU CALL YOURSELF!
THERE ARE OTHERS WHO CAN ANSWER-- AND BE ANSWERED TO.
THE BEING YOU KILLED WAS ONE OF MY LEGION-- AND FOR THAT MURDER MUST YOU MAKE PAYMENT!
OR SSSTHGAR SHALL TAKE IT-- FROM YOUR PALE, PINK HIDE!

WHO ART THOU, LIZARD-- AND WHERE DOST THOU COME FROM?
AHH... I SEE THE ERROR.
WHAT HAST THOU DONE WITH MY FATHER ODIN,--AND YEA, ALL OF ASGARD?
YOU THINK IT WAS WE WHO INVADED YOUR LAND!
KNOW THEN, ASGARDIAN, THAT WE ARE BOTH VICTIMS OF THE SAME EVIL--
-- AN EVIL I SHALL GLADLY EXPLAIN, OVER A MUG OF RICH ALE.
THEN LET US GO TO THE ODIN-KEEP.
THERE SHALL WE TALK, STRANGER.
I LIKE IT NOT, FANDRAL 'TIS TOO EASY.
THOU ART A MAN OF MANY SUSPICIONS, HOGUN. TAKE HEART.
THOR HATH NEVER LED US WRONGLY ERE NOW... AND I, FOR ONE, DO RETAIN MY FAITH IN THE THUNDER GOD.
WE'LL SEE, FANDRAL. WE'LL SEE.
AND SO, SEVERAL MUGS LATER, IN THE PALACE ROYAL...
MINE ARE AN OLD PEOPLE, THOR-- AND BECAUSE OF IT, WE ARE A PROUD PEOPLE.
TO UNDERSTAND THAT PRIDE-- AND HOW IT AFFECTS THIS MOMENT-- YOU MUST BEAR WITH A SHORT TALE...


IT IS THE STORY OF OUR CREATION -- AND THROUGH IT, THE STORY OF HOW WE CAME TO BE IN ASGARD--
--AND HOW WE SHALL SURELY DIE!!
MY WORLD WAS BORN EONS AGO, WHEN THE UNIVERSE WAS YOUNG AND THE ONLY GODS WERE THE LORDS OF FIRE AND CREATION.
IT NESTLED, UNNOTICED, IN A CORNER OF THIS GALAXY--
--AND FOR TWICE A BILLION YEARS, IT STEAMED--AND GREW.
MY PEOPLE EVOLVED FROM LIZARDS, MY MAMMALIAN FRIEND. AT FIRST, WE WERE MERE DIGITED SAVAGES--
--HUNTING THE GREAT HORNED BEASTS WHO INHABITED OUR DISMAL SWAMPS.
"THEN, AS THE AGES PASSED, WE LEARNED TO USE OUR OPPOSING THUMBS-- TO MAKE TOOLS, BUILD HUTS--
"--AND GRADUALLY--PAINFULLY-- WE BECAME CIVILIZED--
"--AND FORMED INSTITUTIONS OF PRIVILEGE AND ALLEGIANCE. WE HAD TOWNS, MAYORS, KINGS.

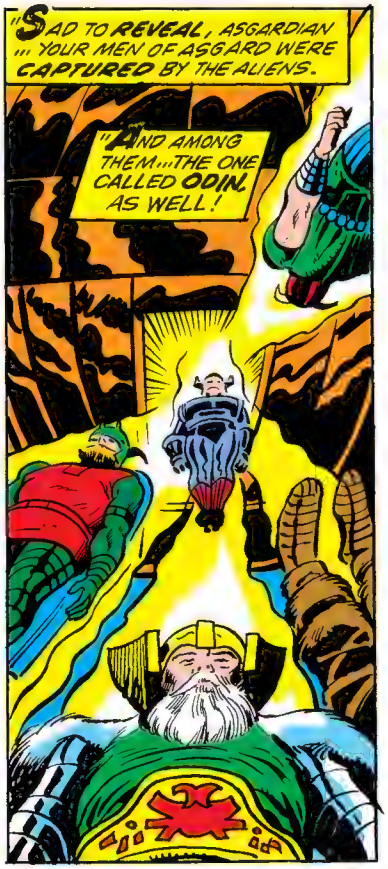
"-- EVERYTHING A WORLD NEEDED TO COUNT ITSELF MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE.
"UNFORTUNATELY, WE WERE NOT THE MASTERS -- AS WE DISCOVERED ONE LATE SUMMER EVENING --
"-- OTHERS WERE!
TAKE THEM ALIVE, DRONES!
THEY'LL FETCH US A FINE PRICE --
-- ON THE BLOCK AT GOLDEN STAR!
BREEE
"MY PEOPLE PUT UP A VALIANT STRUGGLE -- BUT IT WAS OF LITTLE USE. THE ALIENS HAD WEAPONS UNLIKE ANY WE'D EVER SEEN --
"--AND OUR FOLK WERE LIKE LAMBS BROUGHT TO THE SLAUGHTER.
"IT WAS THEN I ENTERED.
ATTACK, BROTHERS!
FOR THE LAND, FOR YOUR LIVES --
FOR THE LOVE OF YOUR LORD AND LADY!
ATTACK!

"WE FELL BY THE HUNDREDS.
"WE HAD NOT A CHANCE.
CARRY THEM ABOARD -- THIS LOT WILL MAKE FINE GLADIATORIAL SLAVES.
NET US A NICE PRICE, THEY WILL!
"AND SO WE LEFT THE LAND OF OUR FATHERS-- AND JOURNEYED THROUGH THE COLD NIGHT OF SPACE, HELD LIKE CATTLE IN THE SHIP'S DANK HOLD.
"WE PLOTTED ESCAPE --BUT IT WAS POINTLESS.
"WE KNEW WE NEVER WOULD.
"IT WAS A NIGHTMARE. WHEN FINALLY WE REACHED A CIVILIZED WORLD, THEY AUCTIONED US LIKE ANIMALS -- AND ONE BY ONE, MY PEOPLE WERE BOUGHT--
"-- UNTIL THE DAY THE ALIENS PASSED NEAR YOUR HALLOWED RAINBOW BRIDGE.
"THEY COULD TELL GOOD STOCK WHEN THEY SAW IT -- AND SO THEY ATTACKED, AS WE WATCHED IN HORROR FROM THE DECKS BELOW.


"HOW LONG THE BATTLE RAGED I CANNOT SAY--BUT IT DID NOT GO QUICKLY.
"YOUR MEN OF ASGARD FOUGHT AS THOUGH POSSESSED BY DEMONS. WAVE AFTER WAVE OF RIDERS RODE THE RAINBOW BRIDGE--
ZAPT!
BRAK
FUNFN!
--AND WAVE AFTER WAVE, LIKE CENTAURS STRUCK BY A HUNTER'S BOLT, THEY FELL!

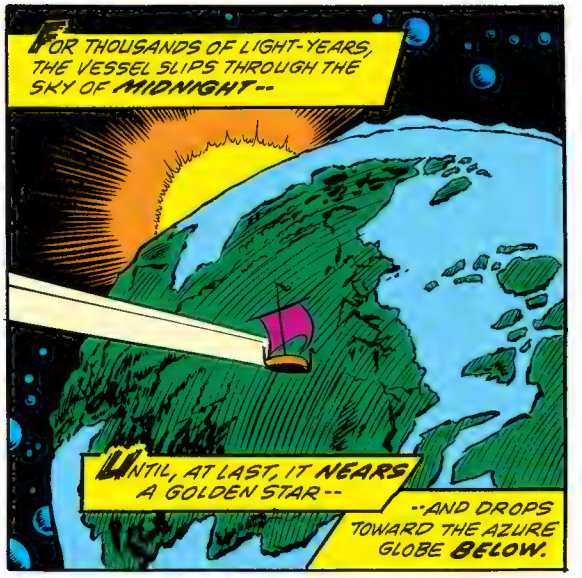
FORWARD! NE'ER SHALL THE MEN OF ASGARD FALL PREY TO SUCH AS THEE!
FOR ASGARD!
FOR ODIN!

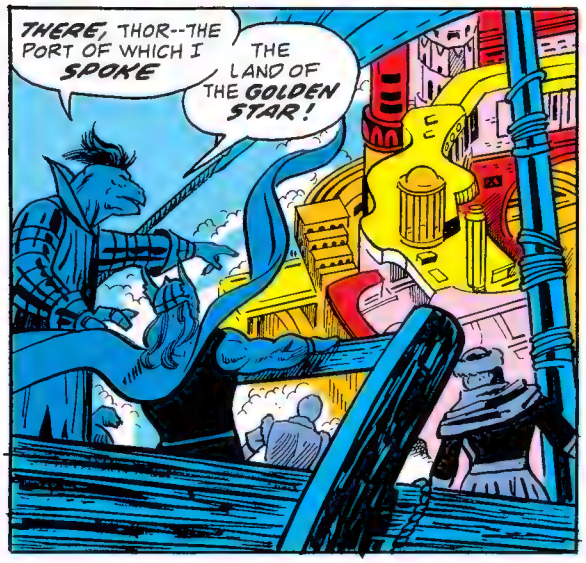
"MANY OF THE ENEMY FELL ALSO, THAT DAY--
"--BUT THOSE THAT REMAINED STILL OUT-NUMBERED THE ASGARDIANS--
"--AND THEIR WEAPONS OUTFOUGHT YOUR FATHER'S SWORDS.

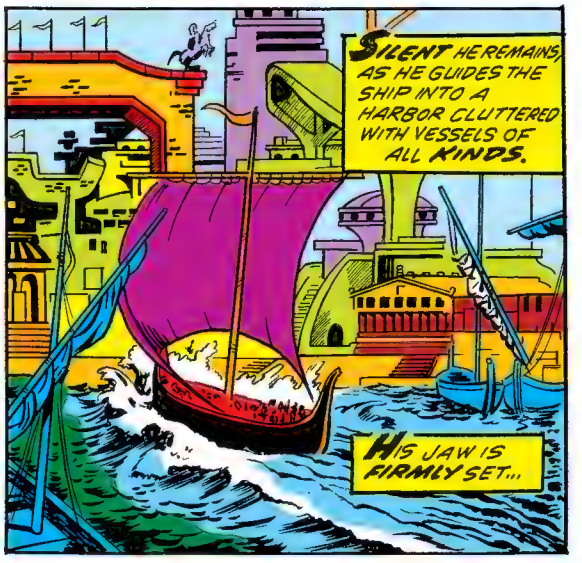

"SAD TO REVEAL, ASGARDIAN ... YOUR MEN OF ASGARD WERE CAPTURED BY THE ALIENS.
"AND AMONG THEM...THE ONE CALLED ODIN, AS WELL!

WE ESCAPED WHILE THE ALIENS LOADED THEIR HOLDS WITH YOUR FATHERS MEN.
WOULD THAT WE COULD HAVE HELPED.
--BUT WE COULD NOT.
BUT, BY ODIN'S BEARD--THE GOD OF THUNDER CAN!
IF THOU CANST BUT GUIDE US.
CONSIDER IT DONE, ASGARDIAN.
WE TOO HAVE REASON FOR REVENGE!
WE SHALL LEAVE AT ONCE!
AND SO, WITHIN THE HOUR, A SLIM VESSEL TAKES TO THE EBON SKY--AND AT ITS GUIDING RUDDER--
--THE GOD OF THUNDER, THOR!
A STRANGE SHIP, THOR ... WE RIDE NO WIND, YET ITS SAILS ARE FULL.
NO HULL ENCLOSES US, BUT STILL... WE CAN BREATHE.
YOUR MAGICKS ARE GREATER THAN SSSTHGAR CAN UNDERSTAND!
AND MAGICKS THEY ARE, SSSTHGAR...

--THE MAGICKS OF THE REALM ETERNAL, WHICH DID FASHION MINE HAMMER--
--AS WELL AS THIS SPACE-FARING VOYAGER.


FOR THOUSANDS OF LIGHT-YEARS, THE VESSEL SLIPS THROUGH THE SKY OF MIDNIGHT--
UNTIL, AT LAST, IT NEARS A GOLDEN STAR--
--AND DROPS TOWARD THE AZURE GLOBE BELOW.

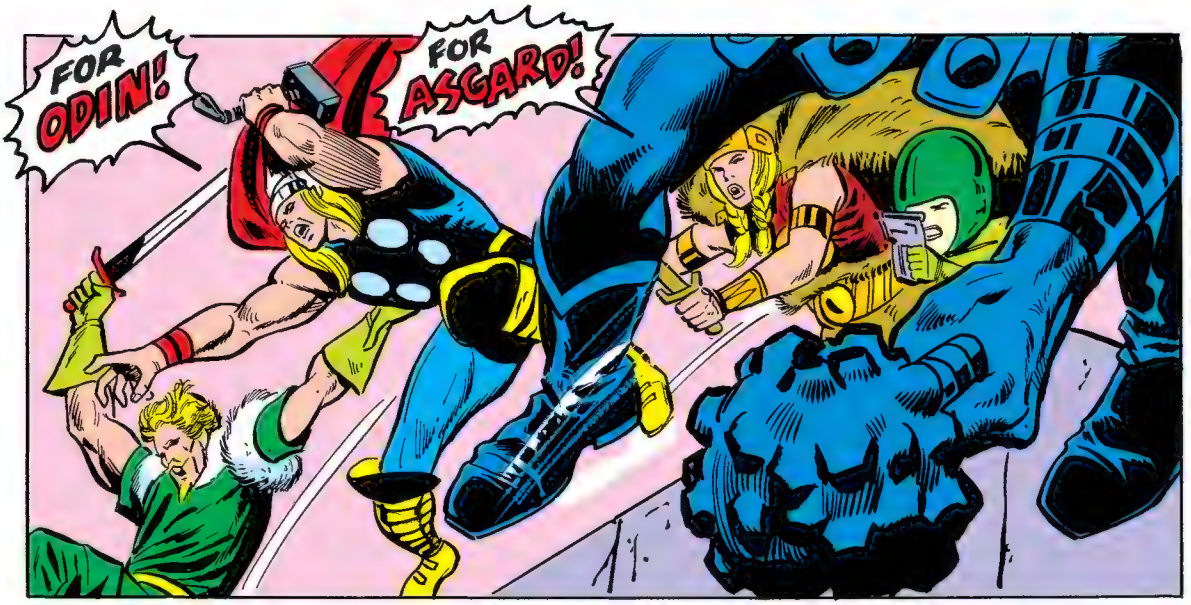

THERE, THOR--THE PORT OF WHICH I SPOKE
THE LAND OF THE GOLDEN STAR!

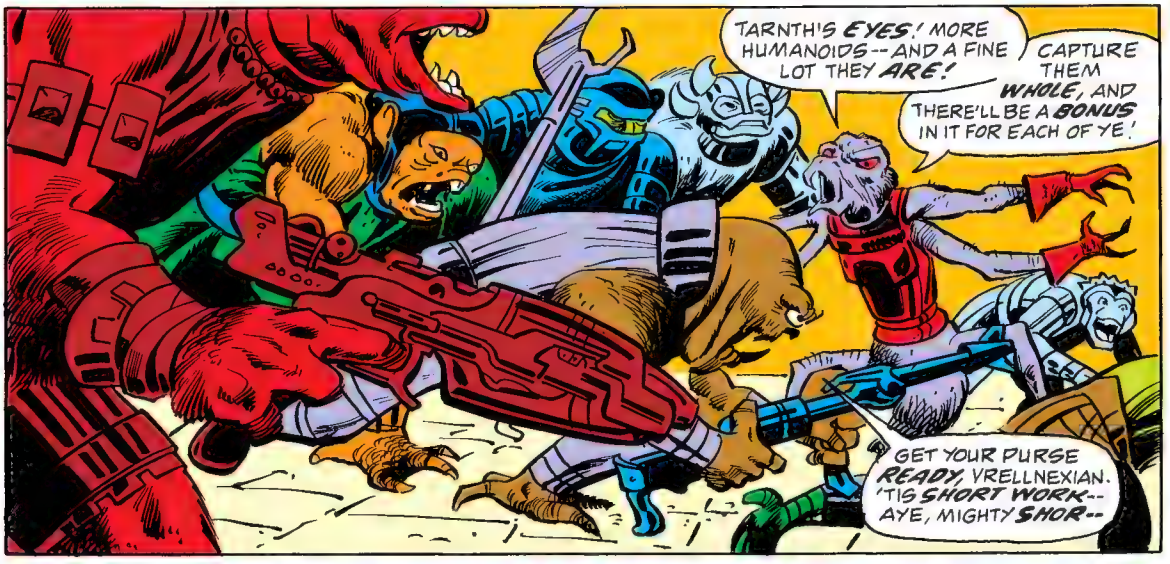

SILENT HE REMAINS, AS HE GUIDES THE SHIP INTO A HARBOR CLUTTERED WITH VESSELS OF ALL KINDS.
HIS JAW IS FIRMLY SET...

...AND, AS HE LEADS THEM INTO THE ALIEN CITY, THERE IS AN AURA OF TRUE NOBILITY ABOUT HIM... FOR IS HE NOT, AND SHALL HE NOT ALWAYS REMAIN...
...THOR, LORD OF THUNDER... MASTER OF THE WORLD'S WINDS!
THE STREETS ART EMPTY, MILORD.
IT RINGS OF A--

BY ALL THE SWORDS OF ASGARD-- NAY! NAY!
IT CANNOT BE! IT CANNOT BE!
IN TRUTH, 'TWOULD BE ENOUGH TO STRIKE A MAN MAD!

NOW, GENTLEBEINGS-- WHAT AM I BID FOR THIS FINE SPECIMEN OF HUMANOID MALE-HOOD?
'TIS TRUE, THE CREATURE GIVES THE APPEARANCE OF AGE--BUT 'TIS APPEARANCE ONLY! SEE THESE STRONG MUSCLES, GENTLEBEINGS-- QUITE FIT FOR DOMESTIC DUTIES, OR INDUSTRIAL CHORES, IF SUCH BE YOUR CHOICE.
AYE, A MAGNIFICENT CREATURE, GENTLEBEINGS--
DO I HEAR AN OPENING BID OF TWENTY CENTURINS?
OH COME, GENTLEBEINGS -- HE'S WORTH TWICE THAT AMOUNT!
SHOW US HIS BITE, VRELLNEXIAN!
I'LL BUY NO HUMANOID WITHOUT TEETH!
LOOKS A BIT OLD TO ME. CAN'T TRUST THOSE VRELL-NEXIANS.
THEY'D AS SOON CUT YOU AS LOOK AT YOU, YOU KNOW.
I WAS TELLING MY MATE THE OTHER DAY-- "OONA, YOU CAN'T--"

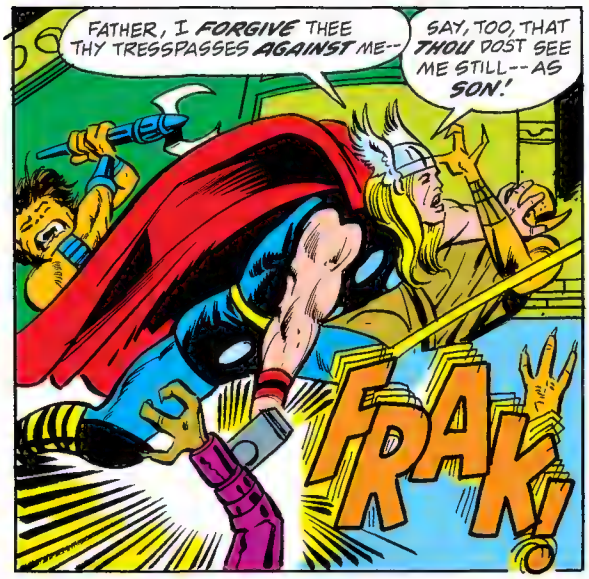

FOR ODIN!
FOR ASGARD!

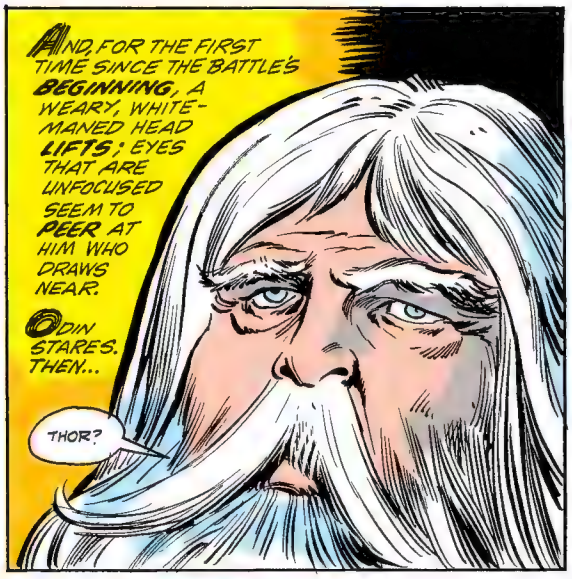

TARNTH'S EYES! MORE HUMANOIDS--AND A FINE LOT THEY ARE!
CAPTURE THEM WHOLE, AND THERE'LL BE A BONUS IN IT FOR EACH OF YE!
GET YOUR PURSE READY, VRELLNEXIAN. 'TIS SHORT WORK--AYE, MIGHTY SHOR--

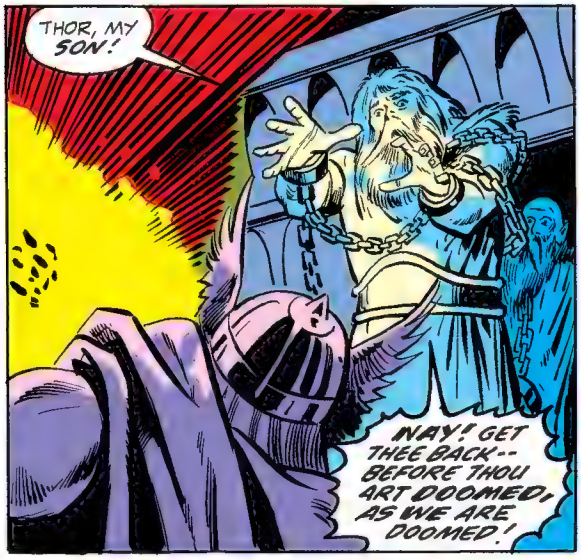
BADA-CRUMP

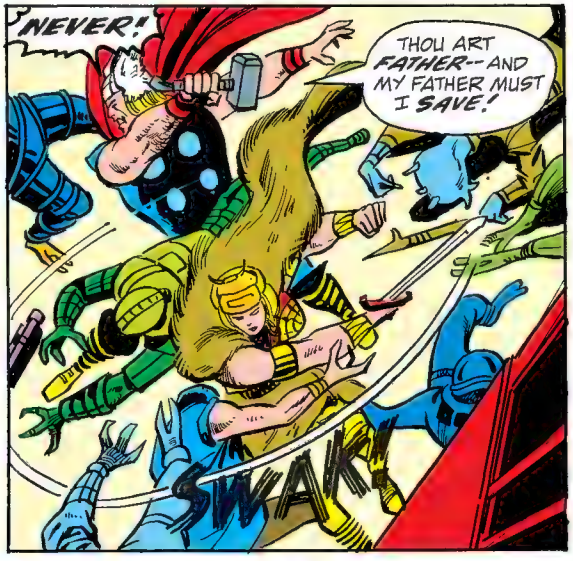
FILTH! YE HAVE SOUGHT TO DEFAME THE FINEST OF THE FINE!
NO WARRIORS' DEATHS DO YE DESERVE--
--BUT WARRIORS' DEATHS SHALL YE RECEIVE!
HO, INSECTS--THE SIGHT OF A SPINNING BLADE DOTH REEL YE!
BETTER STILL WHEN THE BLADE SINKS HOME!
ENOUGH TALK, FANDRAL.
OUR DUTY IS CLEAR.
THESE MONSTERS MUST FALL--
NOW!
THE ASGARDIANS FIGHT WELL, SSSTHGAR. 'TIS GOOD WE FOLLOWED YOUR PLAN.
ALONE, WE COULD NEVER TRIUMPH...
OF COURSE, GORNEY. WHAT OTHER CHOICE?
...NEVER FIND REVENGE...
...BUT NOW, WITH OUR FORMER PARTNERS ON THE RUN, WE SHALL BE MASTERS OF THE GOLDEN STAR.
AND I SHALL RULE--AS IS FIT FOR THE LORD OF THE LIZARDS!

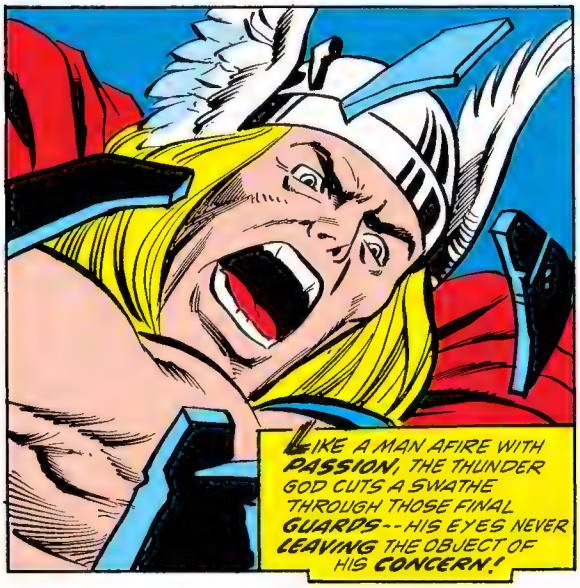
BEHIND ME, SILAS GRANT!
DEFEND MY FLANK, AND I SHALL DEFEND YOURS!
THOUGH THAT MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN AT FIRST IT SEEMED--
--FOR MY ENERGY GUN HAS LOST ITS CHARGE--
--AND I MUST DEPEND ON PHYSICAL SKILL ALONE.
FORTUNATE IT IS--WE COLONIZERS ARE NO STRANGERS TO PHYSICAL STRATEGY.
HIE!
SNAK!
FORWARD, FOR ASGARD!
NO MATTER IS IT WHAT CRIMES ODIN DID COMMIT AGAINST US ERE THIS MOMENT--
STILL IS HE BLOOD OF MY BLOOD--ASGARDIAN ALL FATHER--AND NAUGHT ELSE MUST E'ER CONCERN US!

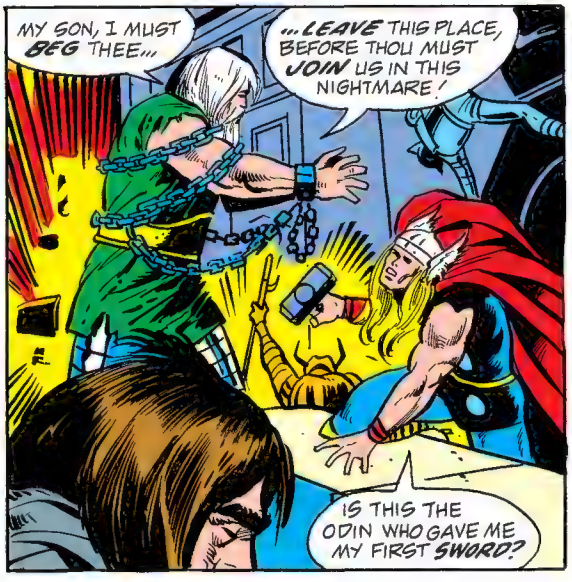

FATHER, I FORGIVE THEE THY TRESSPASSES AGAINST ME--
SAY, TOO, THAT THOU DOST SEE ME STILL--AS SON!
FRAK!

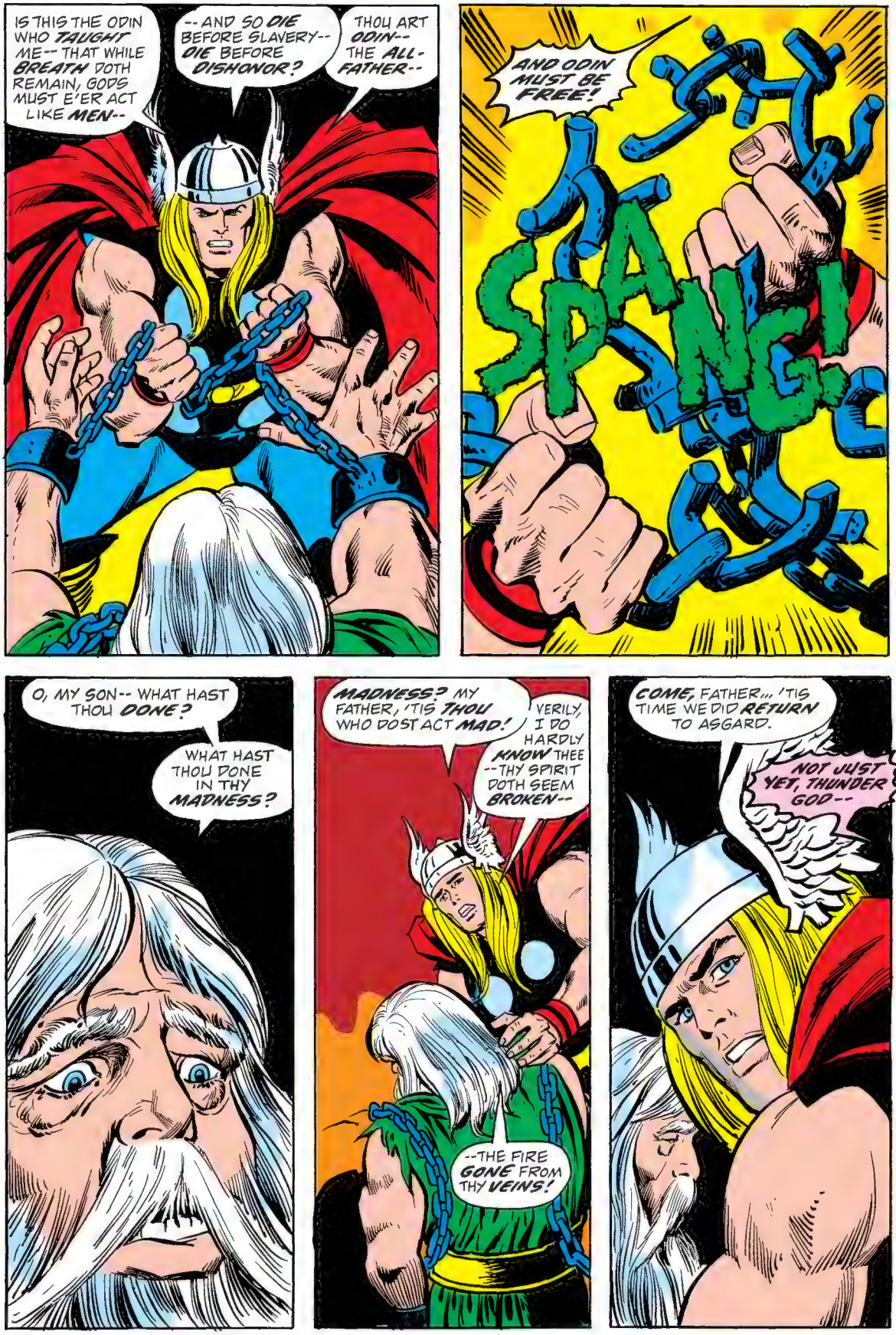

AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE BATTLE'S BEGINNING, A WEARY, WHITE-MANED HEAD LIFTS; EYES THAT ARE UNFOCUSED SEEM TO PEER AT HIM WHO DRAWS NEAR.
ODIN STARES. THEN...
THOR?


THOR, MY SON!
NAY! GET THEE BACK--BEFORE THOU ART DOOMED, AS WE ARE DOOMED!


NEVER!
THOU ART FATHER--AND MY FATHER MUST I SAVE!
SWAK!


LIKE A MAN AFIRE WITH PASSION, THE THUNDER GOD CUTS A SWATHE THROUGH THOSE FINAL GUARDS--HIS EYES NEVER LEAVING THE OBJECT OF HIS CONCERN!


MY SON, I MUST BEG THEE...
...LEAVE THIS PLACE, BEFORE THOU MUST JOIN US IN THIS NIGHTMARE!
IS THIS THE ODIN WHO GAVE ME MY FIRST SWORD?


IS THIS THE ODIN WHO TAUGHT ME-- THAT WHILE BREATH DOTH REMAIN, GODS MUST E'ER ACT LIKE MEN--
--AND SO OIE BEFORE SLAVERY-- OIE BEFORE DISHONOR?
THOU ART ODIN-- THE ALL-FATHER--
AND ODIN MUST BE FREE!
SPANG
O, MY SON-- WHAT HAST THOU DONE?
WHAT HAST THOU DONE IN THY MADNESS?
MADNESS? MY FATHER, 'TIS THOU WHO DOST ACT MAD!
VERILY, I DO HARDLY KNOW THEE --THY SPIRIT DOTH SEEM BROKEN--
--THE FIRE GONE FROM THY VEINS!
COME, FATHER... 'TIS TIME WE DID RETURN TO ASGARD.
NOT JUST YET, THUNDER GOD--

SSSTHGAR BEGS YOU-- REMAIN A WHILE.
WE HAVE YET TO FULLY THANK YOU FOR RIDDING US OF OUR PERFIDIOUS PARTNERS--
--THE VRELLNEXIANS WHO MAROONED US ON ASGARD!
WITH THOSE CURSED ARTHROPODS GONE, WE SHALL RESUME OUR POSITION OF GREATNESS--
--AN ACT YOU ARE POWERLESS TO STOP--
--FOR YOU SEE, "SLAVES" --NOT ONLY HAS THE BATTLE WEARIED YOU--
BUT, NOW, YOU ARE HOPELESSLY, COMPLETELY SURROUNDED!
NEXT DISASTER!

THOR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
20¢ CC
213 JULY 02450
THE MIGHTY
THOR
™
®
STOP HIM! IF HE ESCAPES-- HE'LL SLAY US ALL!!
IN THIS PULSE-POUNDING ISSUE--
THE THUNDER GOD BREAKS FREE!
MAKE WAY FOR...
THE DEMON BRIGADE!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™
THE DEMON BRIGADE!!
THE SCENE: A SQUALID SLAVE MARKET ON THE LIGHT-YEARS-DISTANT PLANET, GOLDEN STAR.
THE CAST: THOR, LORD OF THE ROLLING THUNDER; HIS ASGARDIAN COMRADES; AND A VERITABLE ARMY OF ALIEN LIZARD-MEN.
THE SITUATION: DESPERATE!
MY SON, I BESEECH THEE-- SURRENDER THYSELVES--
--ELSE THOU SHALT SURELY DOOM US ALL!
NAY, FATHER--IF NEEDS WE MUST PERISH, 'TWILL NOT BE AS SLAVES--
--BUT AS IMMORTALS OF GLORIOUS ASGARD--
--AS WARRIORS BORN!!
14167
GERRY CONWAY STORY
LEN WEIN SCRIPTER
J. BUSCEMA/D. PERLIN ARTISTS
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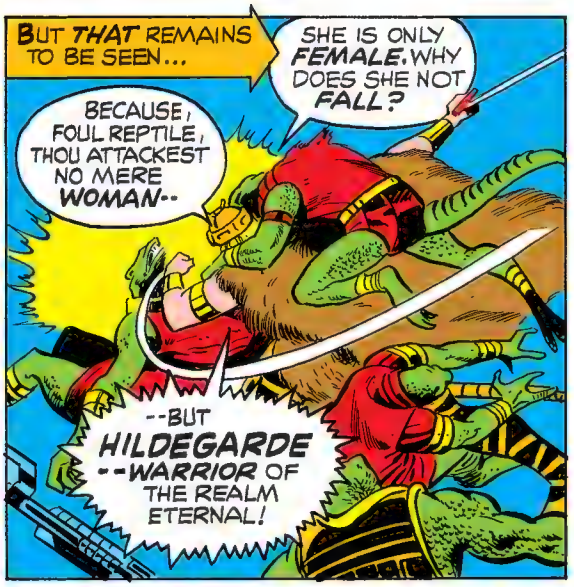
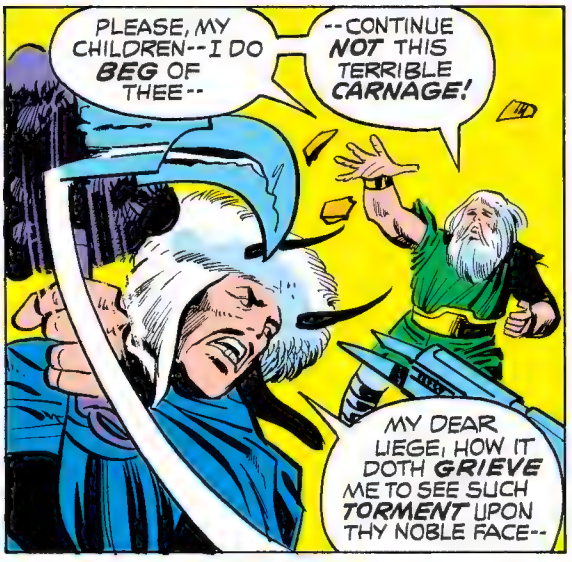
G. WEIN COLORIST
ROY THOMAS EDITOR

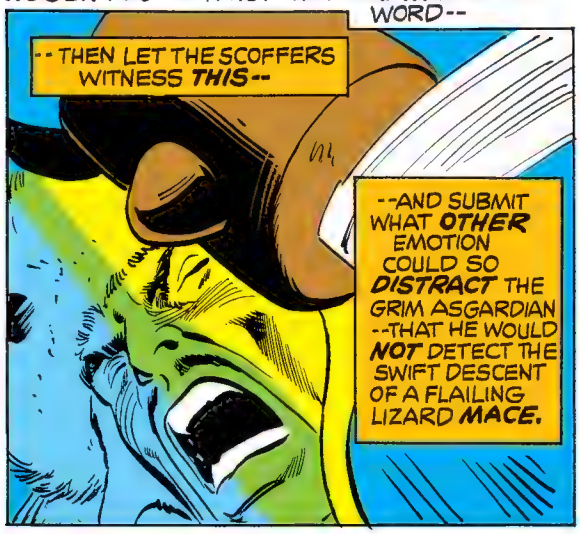
THEN PERISH YOU SHALL, ASGARDIAN FOOL-- IF YOU DEMAND IT!
--AND PERHAPS WE WILL LET YOU LIVE--
MY LEGIONS OUTNUMBER YOU A HUNDRED-TO-ONE. HOW LONG DO YOU HOPE TO STAND AGAINST SUCH ODDS?
THROW DOWN YOUR WEAPONS-- ADMIT YOUR DEFEAT--
--AS SLAVES!
CONCEDE TO SUCH AS THEE?
NAY, LIZARD--NOT WHILST THERE REMAINS BREATH WITHIN OUR BODIES--
--OR STRENGTH WITHIN OUR LIMBS WITH WHICH TO--
"--STRIKE!!"
THWA-DOMM!
NOW, MY FRIENDS-- ATTACK--
--FOR YOUR LIEGE--FOR YOUR LAND--
--FOR ODIN--
--FOR ASGARD!

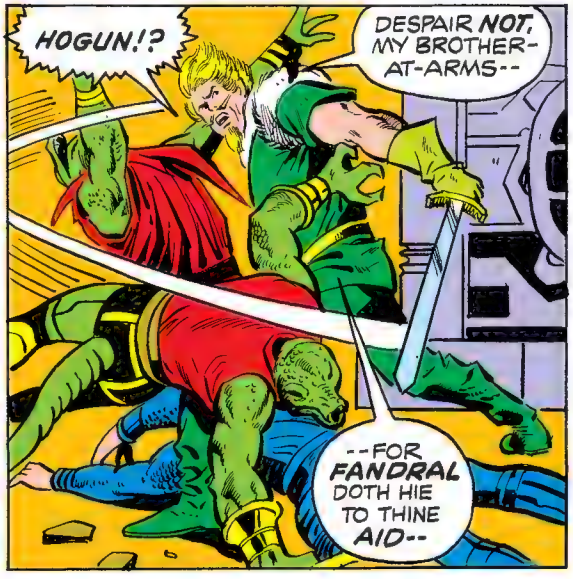
NAY, THOR--BATTLE NOT IN MY NAME--FOR THOU DOST STRUGGLE IN VAIN!
I PRAY THEE--YIELD--WHILST STILL THOU HAST THY LIFE!
THOU CANST NOT HOPE TO TRIUMPH 'GAINST DEMONS SUCH AS THESE!

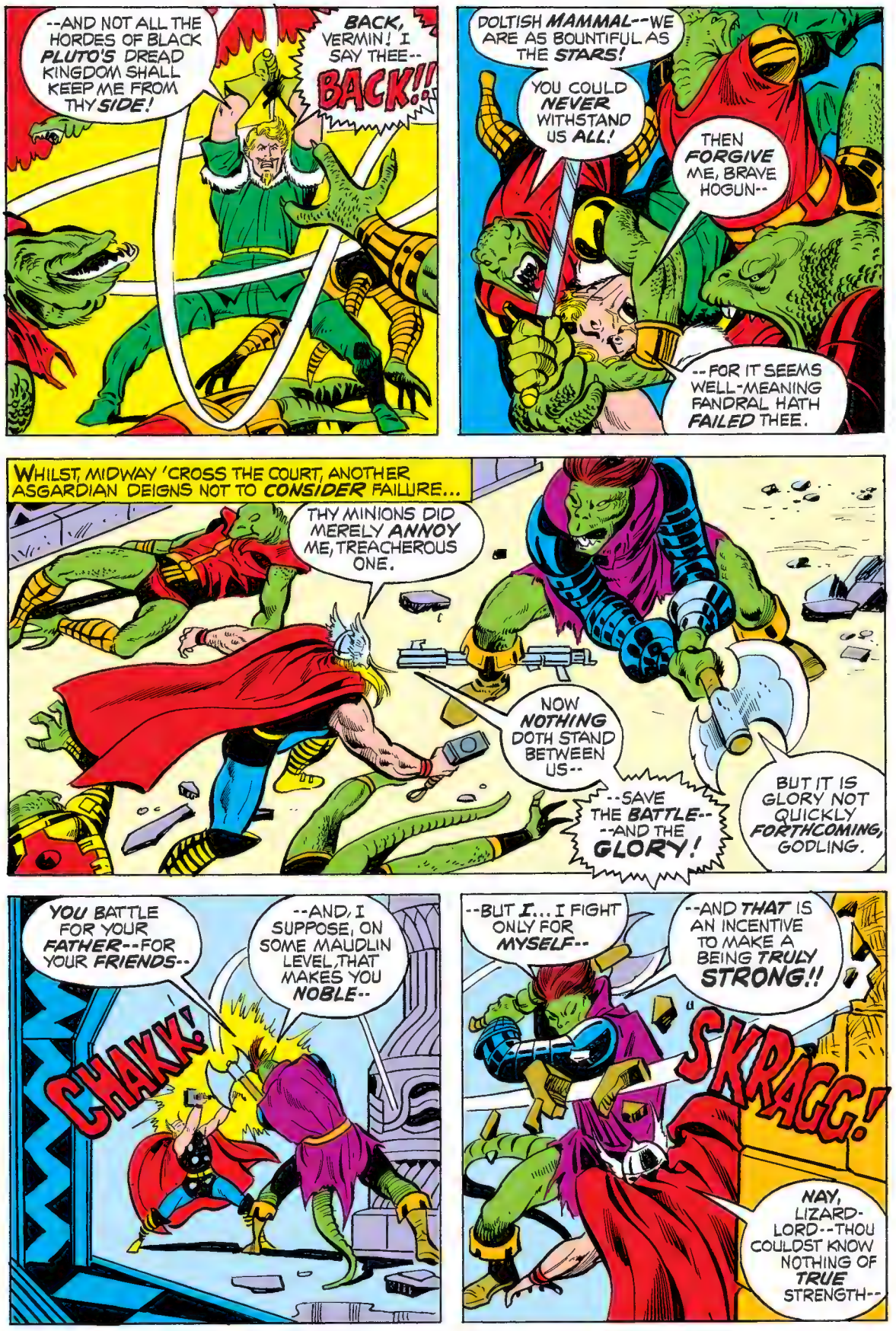

BUT THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN...
SHE IS ONLY FEMALE. WHY DOES SHE NOT FALL?
BECAUSE, FOUL REPTILE, THOU ATTACKEST NO MERE WOMAN--
--BUT HILDEGARDE --WARRIOR OF THE REALM ETERNAL!


PLEASE, MY CHILDREN--I DO BEG OF THEE--
--CONTINUE NOT THIS TERRIBLE CARNAGE!
MY DEAR LIEGE, HOW IT DOTH GRIEVE ME TO SEE SUCH TORMENT UPON THY NOBLE FACE--

COMPASSION: THERE BE THOSE WHO SAY DARK HOGUN KNOWETH NOT THE MEANING OF THE WORD--


--THEN LET THE SCOFFERS WITNESS THIS--
--AND SUBMIT WHAT OTHER EMOTION COULD SO DISTRACT THE GRIM ASGARDIAN --THAT HE WOULD NOT DETECT THE SWIFT DESCENT OF A FLAILING LIZARD MACE.

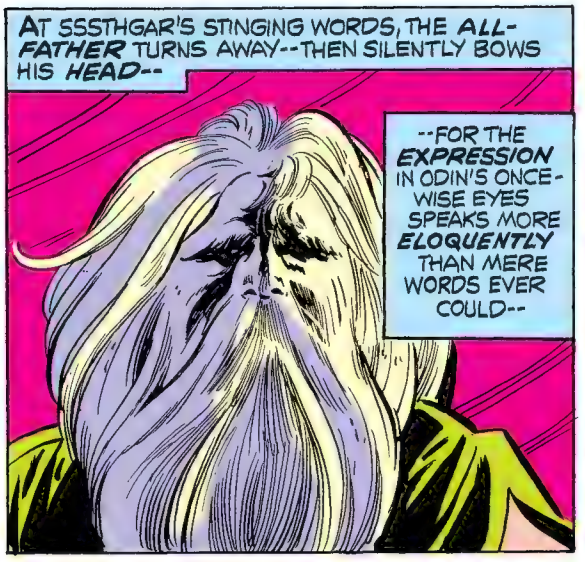


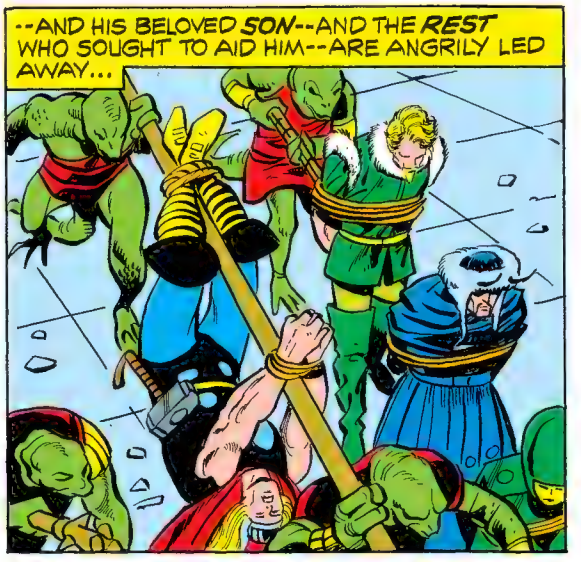

--AND NOT ALL THE HORDES OF BLACK PLUTO'S DREAD KINGDOM SHALL KEEP ME FROM THY SIDE!
BACK, VERMIN! I SAY THEE--
BACK!!
DOLTISH MAMMAL--WE ARE AS BOUNTIFUL AS THE STARS!
YOU COULD NEVER WITHSTAND US ALL!
THEN FORGIVE ME, BRAVE HOGUN--
--FOR IT SEEMS WELL-MEANING FANDRAL HATH FAILED THEE.
WHILST, MIDWAY 'CROSS THE COURT, ANOTHER ASGARDIAN DEIGNS NOT TO CONSIDER FAILURE...
THY MINIONS DID MERELY ANNOY ME, TREACHEROUS ONE.
NOW NOTHING DOTH STAND BETWEEN US--
--SAVE THE BATTLE-- --AND THE GLORY!
BUT IT IS GLORY NOT QUICKLY FORTHCOMING, GODLING.
YOU BATTLE FOR YOUR FATHER--FOR YOUR FRIENDS--
--AND, I SUPPOSE, ON SOME MAUDLIN LEVEL, THAT MAKES YOU NOBLE--
CHAKK!
--BUT I... I FIGHT ONLY FOR MYSELF--
--AND THAT IS AN INCENTIVE TO MAKE A BEING TRULY STRONG!!
SKRAGG!
NAY, LIZARD-LORD--THOU COULDST KNOW NOTHING OF TRUE STRENGTH--

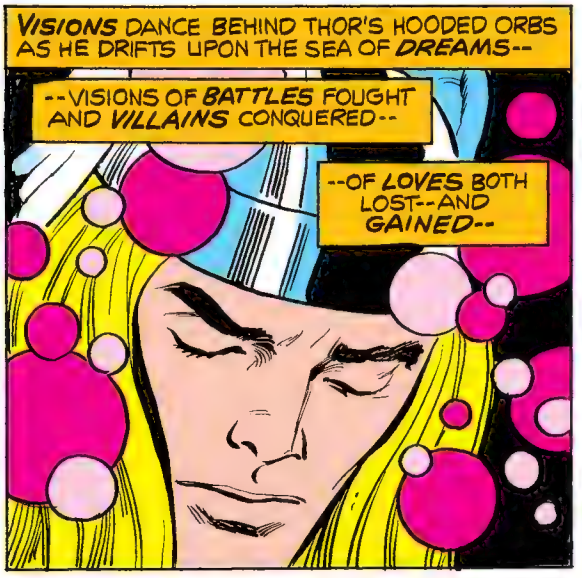
--TILL THOU HAST FACED THE POWER OF MINE MYSTIC MALLET, MJOLNIR!
THRAKK!
INSOLENT ASGARDIAN PUP! SSSTHGAR NEEDS NO FRAIL WEAPONS--
--TO DEAL WITH SUCH AS YOU!
I'LL TEAR YOU ASUNDER WITH MY BARE--
KA-THUDD!
EFFECTIVE, HIGILA-- BUT UNNECESSARY. I COULD HAVE DEFEATED THE GODLING UNAIDED.
STILL-- THE DEED IS DONE--AND THERE IS OTHER BUSINESS YET UNFINISHED.
HOW GOES THE BATTLE WITH THE THUNDER GOD'S FRIENDS?
AS EXPECTED, LORD SSSTHGAR. WE'LL HAVE NO FURTHER TROUBLE FROM THEM.
EVEN IN DEFEAT, THOR'S COMPANIONS STAND DEFIANT--
--AND FOR AN INSTANT, SILENCE WASHES ACROSS THE SCENE--
--TO BE SUDDENLY REPLACED BY A CAUTIOUS SHUFFLING-- AND THE MURMUR OF FEARFUL VOICES.
LIKE JACKALS AFTER THE SLAUGHTER--
--THE SCAVENGERS OF GOLDEN STAR HAVE COME--

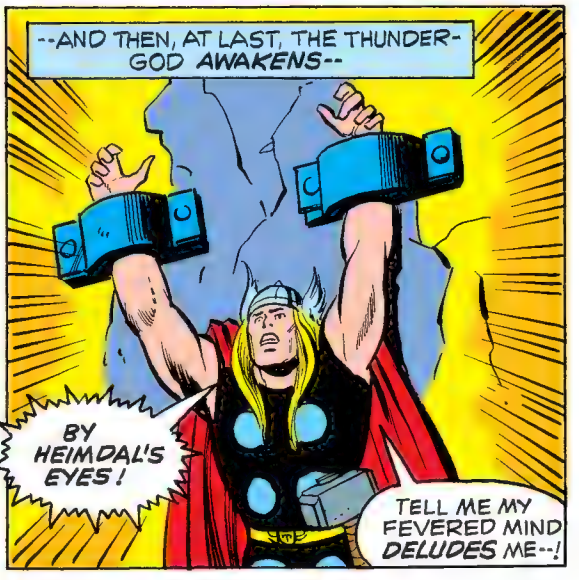
--ONLY TO FLEE IN MORTAL TERROR FROM THE WRATH OF HE WHO IS CALLED LIZARD-LORD...
AWAY, WORTHLESS RABBLE--BACK INTO YOUR HOLES LIKE THE RODENTS YOU ARE!
SSSTHGAR HAS MORE PRESSING NEED OF THOSE YOU SEEK TO DESPOIL!

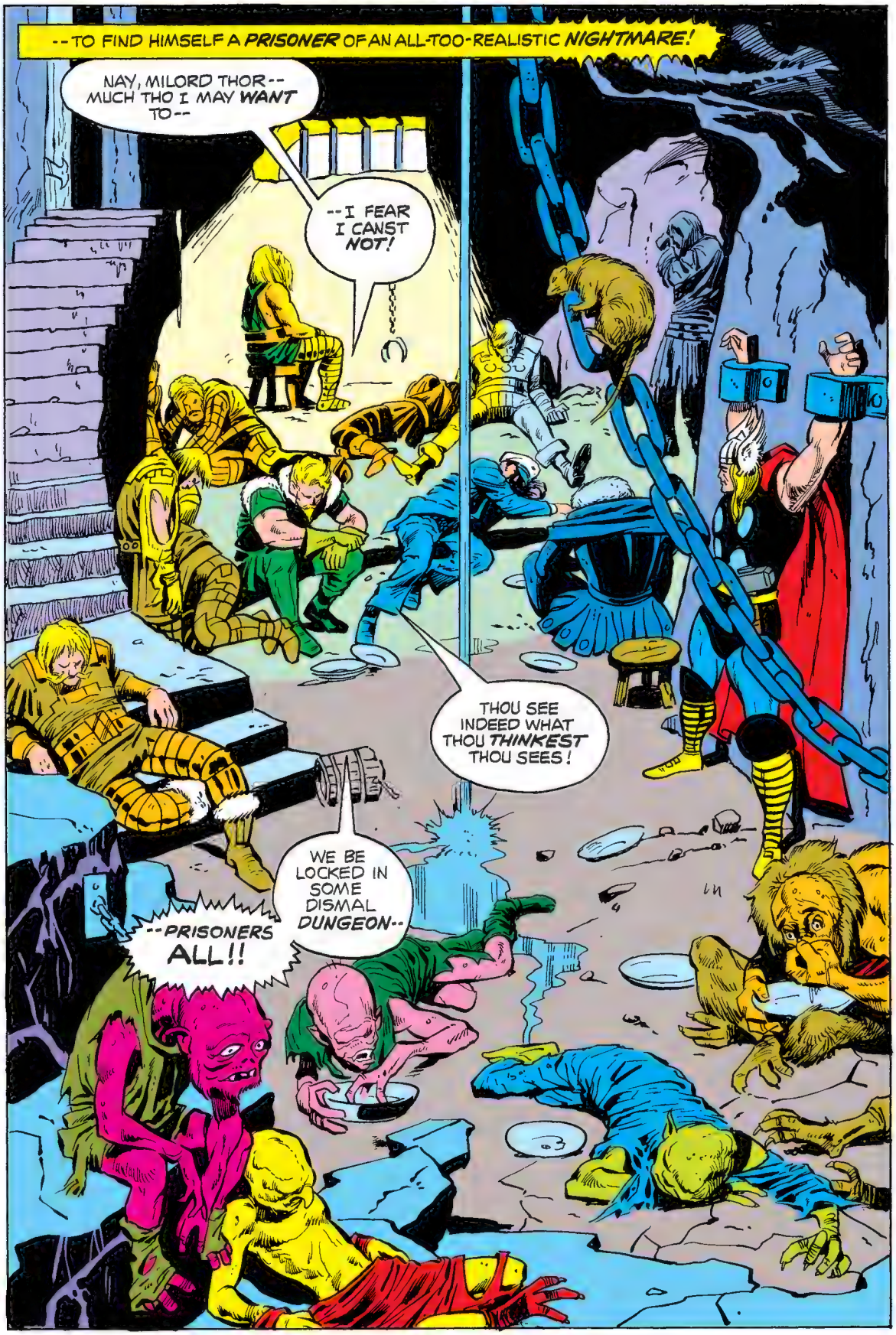
AND I OWE ALL THANKS TO YOU, OLD MAN!
IF YOUR SUBJECTS DID NOT HAVE YOU TO CHECK THEIR FULL WRATH--
--OURS WOULD HAVE BEEN A COSTLY VICTORY INDEED!

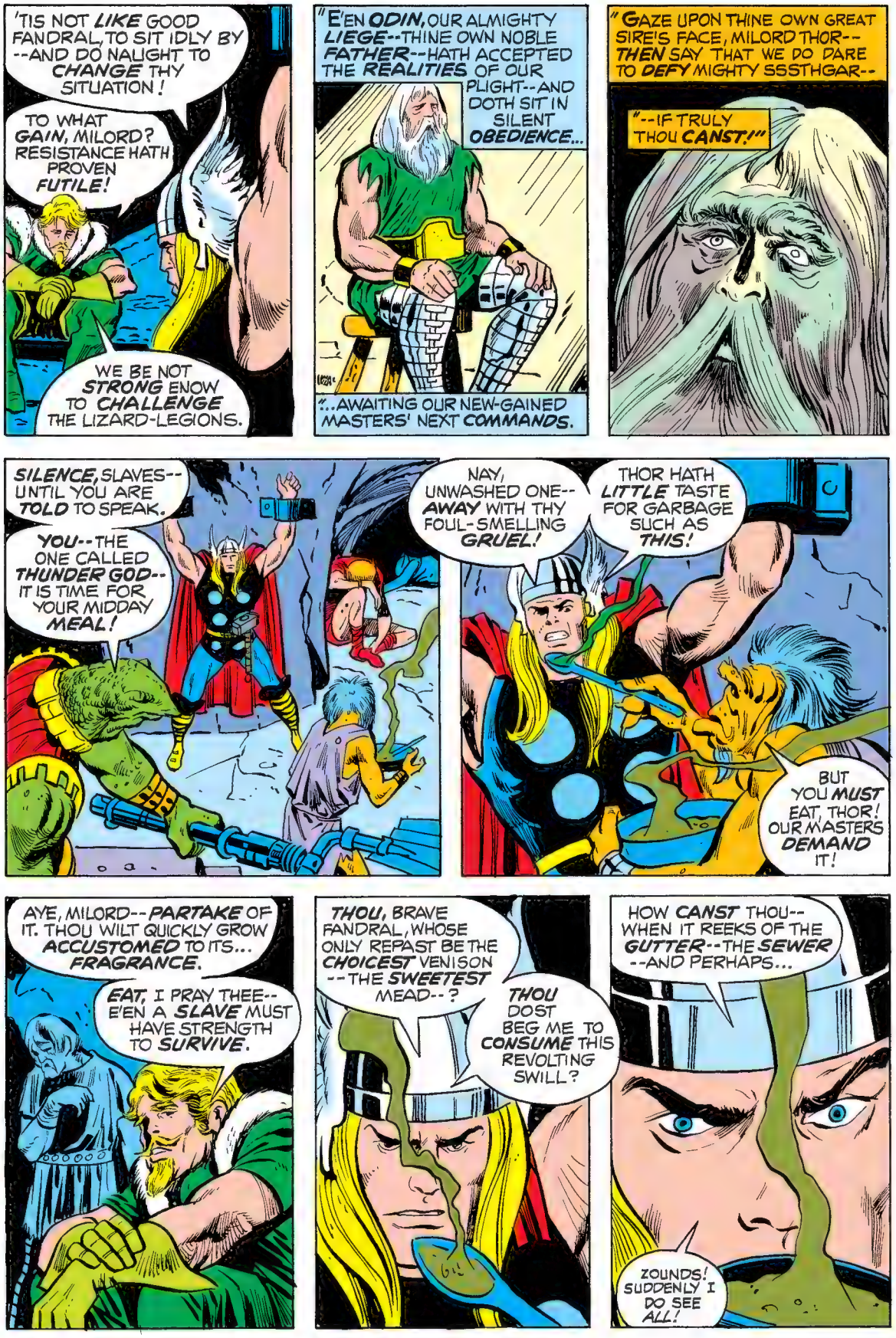

AT SSSTHGAR'S STINGING WORDS, THE ALL-FATHER TURNS AWAY--THEN SILENTLY BOWS HIS HEAD--
--FOR THE EXPRESSION IN ODIN'S ONCE-WISE EYES SPEAKS MORE ELOQUENTLY THAN MERE WORDS EVER COULD--


--AND HIS BELOVED SON--AND THE REST WHO SOUGHT TO AID HIM--ARE ANGRILY LED AWAY...


VISIONS DANCE BEHIND THOR'S HOODED ORBS AS HE DRIFTS UPON THE SEA OF DREAMS--
--VISIONS OF BATTLES FOUGHT AND VILLAINS CONQUERED--
--OF LOVES BOTH LOST--AND GAINED--

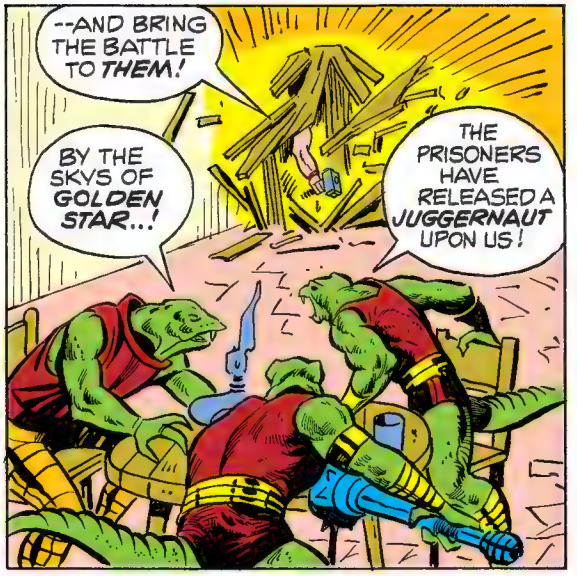

--AND THEN, AT LAST, THE THUNDER-GOD AWAKENS--
BY HEIMDAL'S EYES!
TELL ME MY FEVERED MIND DELUDES ME--!


--TO FIND HIMSELF A PRISONER OF AN ALL-TOO-REALISTIC NIGHTMARE!
NAY, MILORD THOR-- MUCH THO I MAY WANT TO--
--I FEAR I CANST NOT!
THOU SEE INDEED WHAT THOU THINKEST THOU SEES!
WE BE LOCKED IN SOME DISMAL DUNGEON--
--PRISONERS ALL!!

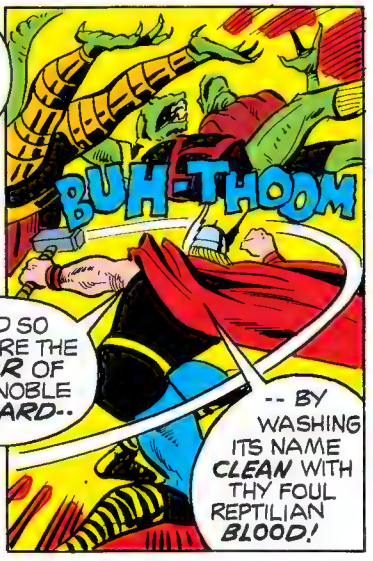

'TIS NOT LIKE GOOD FANDRAL, TO SIT IDLY BY --AND DO NAUGHT TO CHANGE THY SITUATION!
TO WHAT GAIN, MILORD? RESISTANCE HATH PROVEN FUTILE!
WE BE NOT STRONG ENOW TO CHALLENGE THE LIZARD-LEGIONS.
"E'EN ODIN, OUR ALMIGHTY LIEGE--THINE OWN NOBLE FATHER--HATH ACCEPTED THE REALITIES OF OUR PLIGHT--AND DOTH SIT IN SILENT OBEDIENCE...
"...AWAITING OUR NEW-GAINED MASTERS' NEXT COMMANDS.
"GAZE UPON THINE OWN GREAT SIRE'S FACE, MILORD THOR-- THEN SAY THAT WE DO DARE TO DEFY MIGHTY SSSTHGAR--
"--IF TRULY THOU CANST!"
SILENCE, SLAVES-- UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO SPEAK.
YOU--THE ONE CALLED THUNDER GOD-- IT IS TIME FOR YOUR MIDDAY MEAL!
NAY, UNWASHED ONE-- AWAY WITH THY FOUL-SMELLING GRUEL!
THOR HATH LITTLE TASTE FOR GARBAGE SUCH AS THIS!
BUT YOU MUST EAT, THOR! OUR MASTERS DEMAND IT!
AYE, MILORD--PARTAKE OF IT. THOU WILT QUICKLY GROW ACCUSTOMED TO ITS... FRAGRANCE.
EAT, I PRAY THEE-- E'EN A SLAVE MUST HAVE STRENGTH TO SURVIVE.
THOU, BRAVE FANDRAL, WHOSE ONLY REPAST BE THE CHOICEST VENISON --THE SWEETEST MEAD--?
THOU DOST BEG ME TO CONSUME THIS REVOLTING SWILL?
HOW CANST THOU-- WHEN IT REEKS OF THE GUTTER--THE SEWER --AND PERHAPS...
ZOUNDS! SUDDENLY I DO SEE ALL!

TO THE PIT WITH THY BITTER BREW, SLAVE--
--WHERE IT DOTH BELONG!
THUDD!
ARROGANT SWINE! YOU'LL EAT THAT MEAL FROM THE FLOOR-- OR I'LL--
UURKK!
AYE, LIZARD-- I'LL EAT THY SOUR MASH--
--WHEN THOU DOST DEVELOP A LESS CORROSIVE TONGUE--
CHOOM!
--AND A TASTE FOR GRANITE WALLS!
IT APPEARS THE LIZARD HATH GONE INTO HIBERNATION--
--BUT HOLD!
THE CACKLE OF VOICES JUST BEYOND YON DOOR--
IF THE FALLEN ONE'S COMRADES HATH HEARD THE COMMOTION--AND DO COME TO SEEK ITS CAUSE--
--THEY SHALL FIND NO SHACKLED SLAVE AWAITING THEM--
--BUT THE RIGHTFUL HEIR TO THE THRONE OF IMMORTAL ASGARD--
--THOR, GOD OF STORM AND THE RAGING THUNDER--
--DEFENDER OF THE REALM ETERNAL!
THEN, WHIRLING TOWARD THE BOLTED DOOR, THE BOLD ASGARDIAN'S HAWKISH EYES ESPY..
--THE GRUEL-- DRUGGED AS I DID SUSPECT!
THEN, 'TIS THIS THAT DOTH HOLD MY FRIENDS IN SUCH ILL-EARNED DEFEAT!

NO TIME HATH I NOW TO SEEK SUCH TREACHERY'S CURE--
--FOR THE LIZARD GUARDS MAY YET DECIDE TO ENTER THIS MILDEWED CHAMBER--
-- LEST I DOTH TAKE THE INITIATIVE--

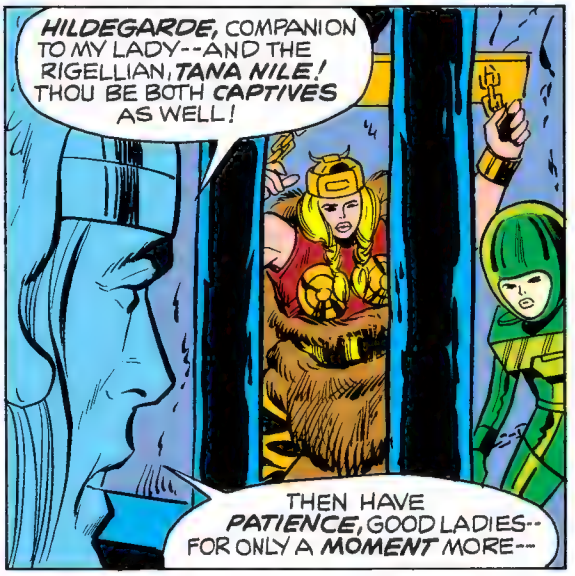

--AND BRING THE BATTLE TO THEM!
BY THE SKYS OF GOLDEN STAR..!
THE PRISONERS HAVE RELEASED A JUGGERNAUT UPON US!

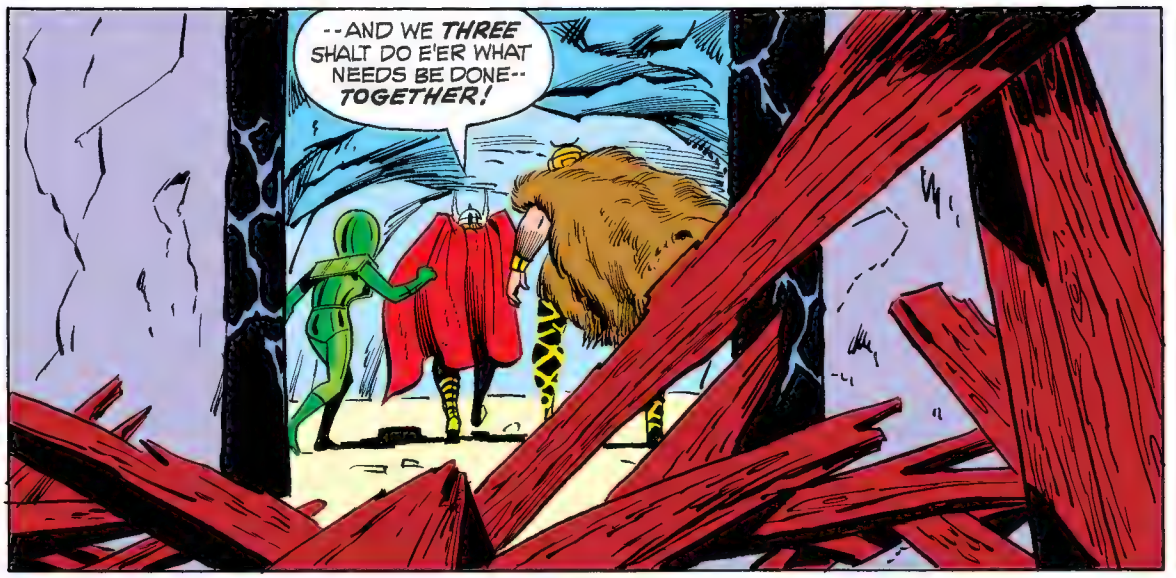
NAY, LIZARD --'TIS ONE LONE GOD--
--COME TO GAIN SATISFACTION FOR THY CRIMES AGAINST THE REST--

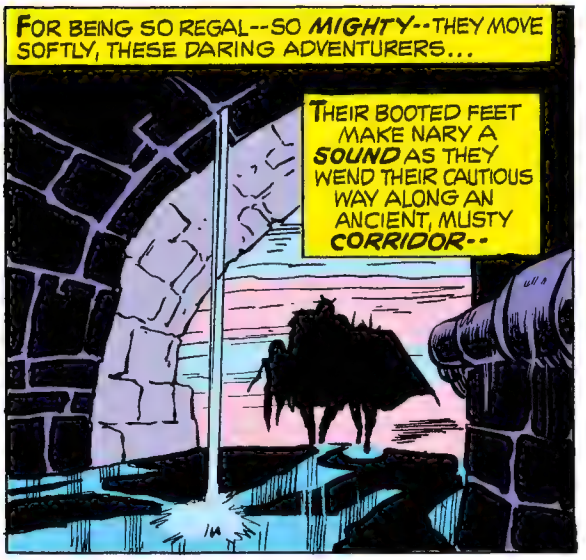

BUH-THOOM
--AND SO RESTORE THE HONOR OF MOST NOBLE ASGARD--
-- BY WASHING ITS NAME CLEAN WITH THY FOUL REPTILIAN BLOOD!

WHAT, SERPENTS-- DOTH NONE OF THEE STAND TO SAY ME NAY? I SHALL--
--EH?
MILORD THOR! FORGET THY VENDETTA FOR THE NONCE--
--AND HEED THE SUMMONS OF THY FRIENDS!

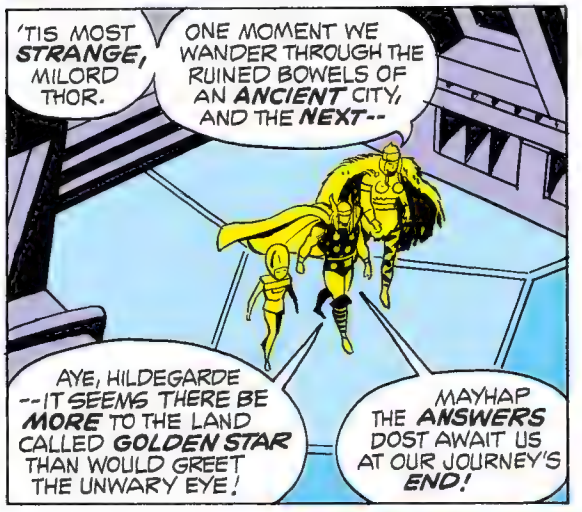
WHO DARE SPEAKEST SO TO THE LORD OF--?
BY THE ALL-FATHER'S FABLED BEARD--!

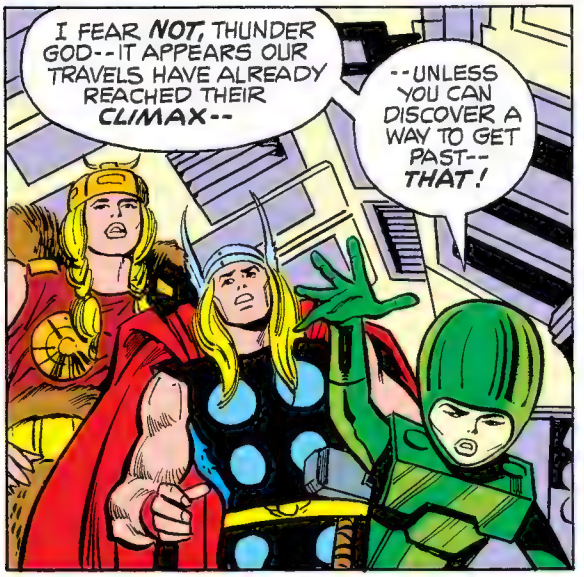

HILDEGARDE, COMPANION TO MY LADY--AND THE RIGELLIAN, TANA NILE! THOU BE BOTH CAPTIVES AS WELL!
THEN HAVE PATIENCE, GOOD LADIES-- FOR ONLY A MOMENT MORE--

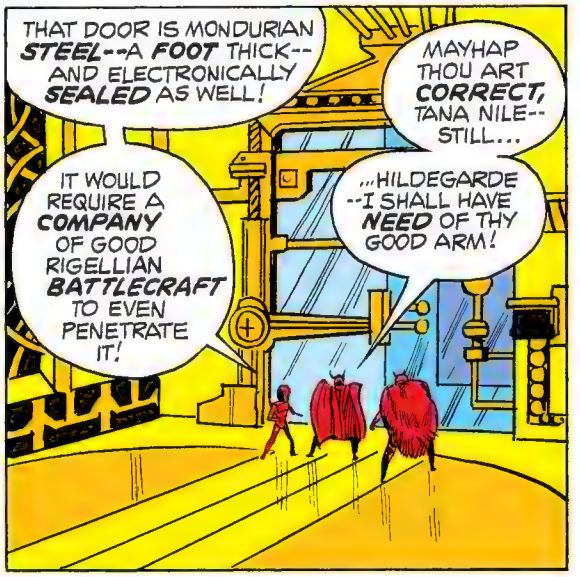



FOR BEING SO REGAL--SO MIGHTY--THEY MOVE SOFTLY, THESE DARING ADVENTURERS...
THEIR BOOTED FEET MAKE NARY A SOUND AS THEY WEND THEIR CAUTIOUS WAY ALONG AN ANCIENT, MUSTY CORRIDOR--

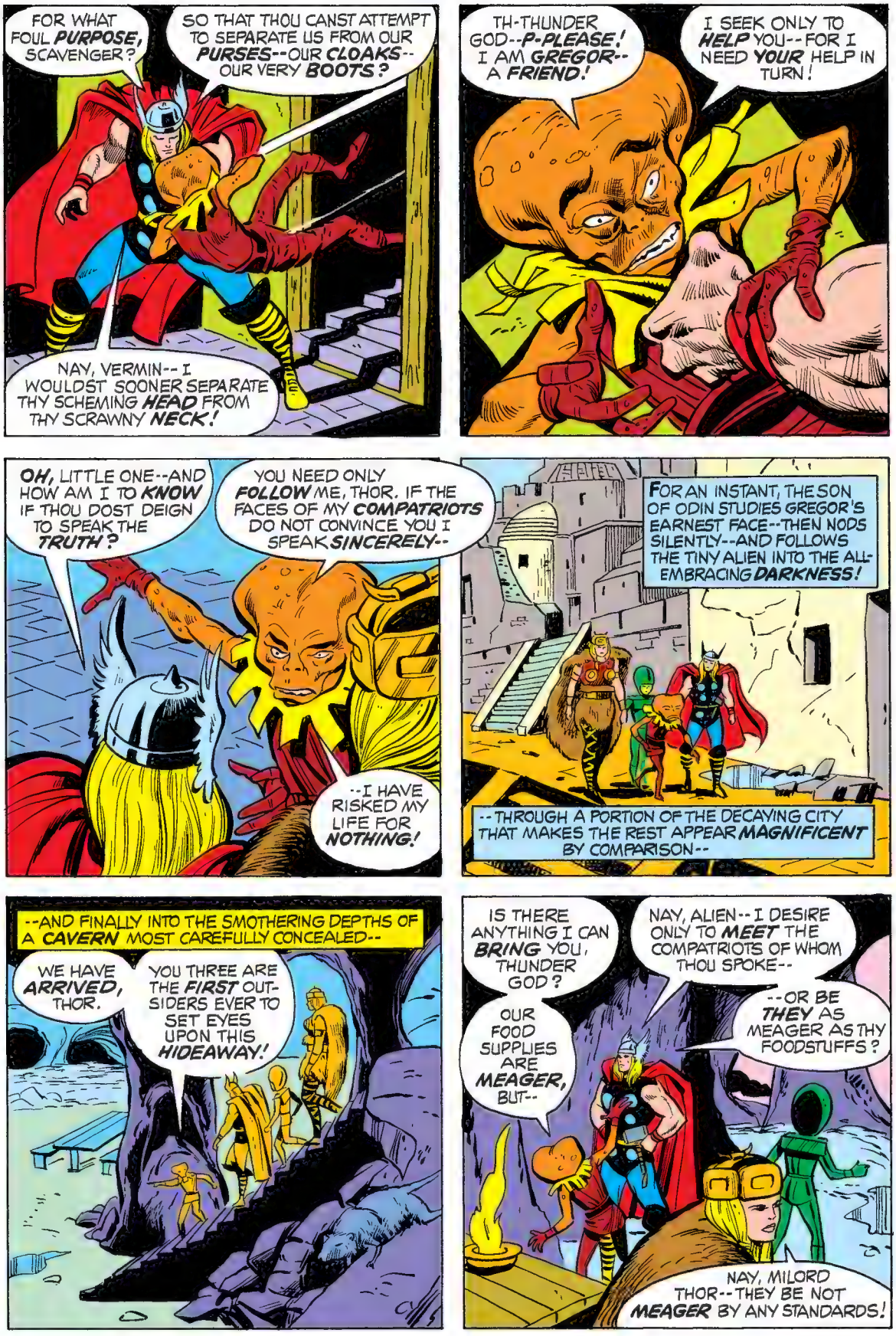
--AND SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES IN SURROUNDINGS NOT NEARLY SO ARCHAIC AND DECAYED...

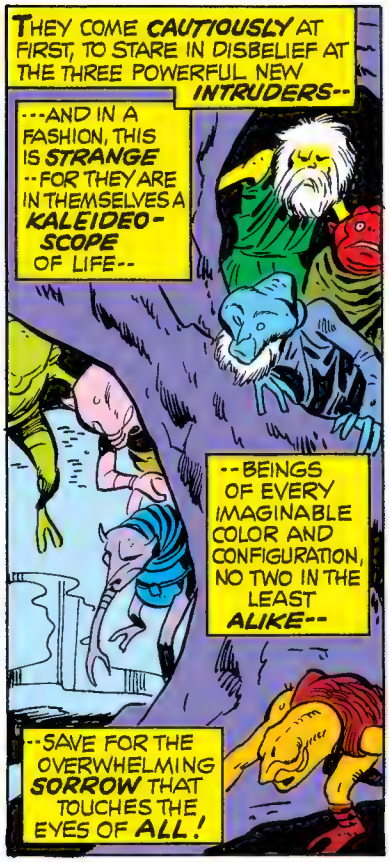

'TIS MOST STRANGE, MILORD THOR.
ONE MOMENT WE WANDER THROUGH THE RUINED BOWELS OF AN ANCIENT CITY, AND THE NEXT--
AYE, HILDEGARDE --IT SEEMS THERE BE MORE TO THE LAND CALLED GOLDEN STAR THAN WOULD GREET THE UNWARY EYE!
MAYHAP THE ANSWERS DOST AWAIT US AT OUR JOURNEY'S END!

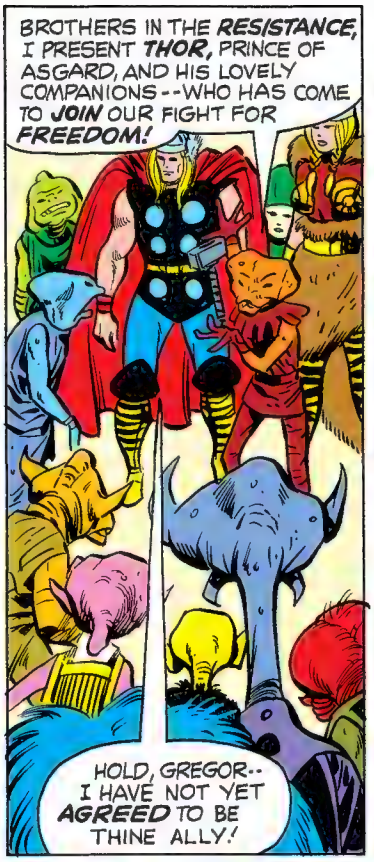

I FEAR NOT, THUNDER GOD--IT APPEARS OUR TRAVELS HAVE ALREADY REACHED THEIR CLIMAX--
--UNLESS YOU CAN DISCOVER A WAY TO GET PAST-- THAT!

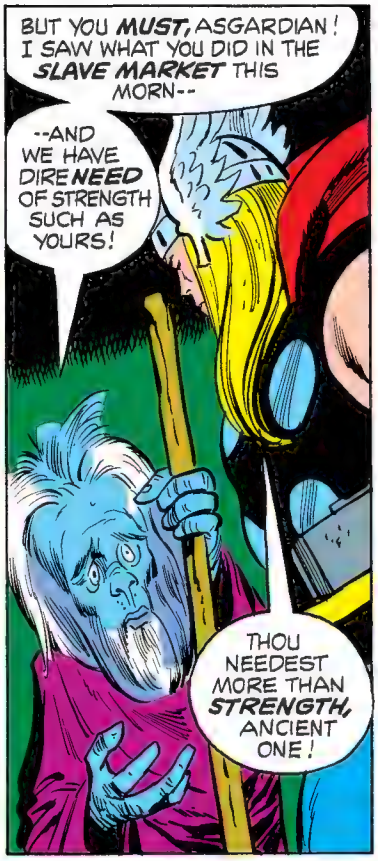

THAT DOOR IS MONDURIAN STEEL--A FOOT THICK-- AND ELECTRONICALLY SEALED AS WELL!
MAYHAP THOU ART CORRECT, TANA NILE-- STILL...
IT WOULD REQUIRE A COMPANY OF GOOD RIGELLIAN BATTLECRAFT TO EVEN PENETRATE IT!
...HILDEGARDE --I SHALL HAVE NEED OF THY GOOD ARM!

SHALL WE SEE IF THE STRENGTH OF TWO LONE ASGARDIANS BE EQUAL TO THAT OF A COMPANY OF RIGELLIAN BATTLE-CRAFT?
AYE, MILORD-- THOUGH IN TRUTH--
--I DO BELIEVE IT IS!
SKRACKK!
PRITHEE, NOBLE THOR-- WHAT BE OUR DESTINATION NOW?
INTO THE CITY PROPER, GOOD HILDEGARDE --TO SEEK AN EXIT FROM THIS THRICE-ACCURSED WORLD!
NIGHT HAS STOLEN UPON GOLDEN STAR WHEN, AT LAST, THE GOD OF THUNDER AND HIS COMPANIONS REACH THE DUBIOUS SANCTUARY OF THE CITY'S TEEMING MARKET PLACE--
--WHERE, 'NEATH A SPRAWLING CLOAK OF SHADOWS, THEY THREAD A SWIFT PATH THROUGH THE GRIMY ALLEYWAYS IN SEARCH OF--
--THEY KNOW NOT TRULY WHAT!
TREAD MOST CAREFULLY, MY FRIENDS.
WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE UNDULY NOTICED IN THIS--
--EH?
PLEASE, SIR-- IF YOU ARE THE ASGARDIAN CALLED THOR- - I BEG YOU--
--HOLD!

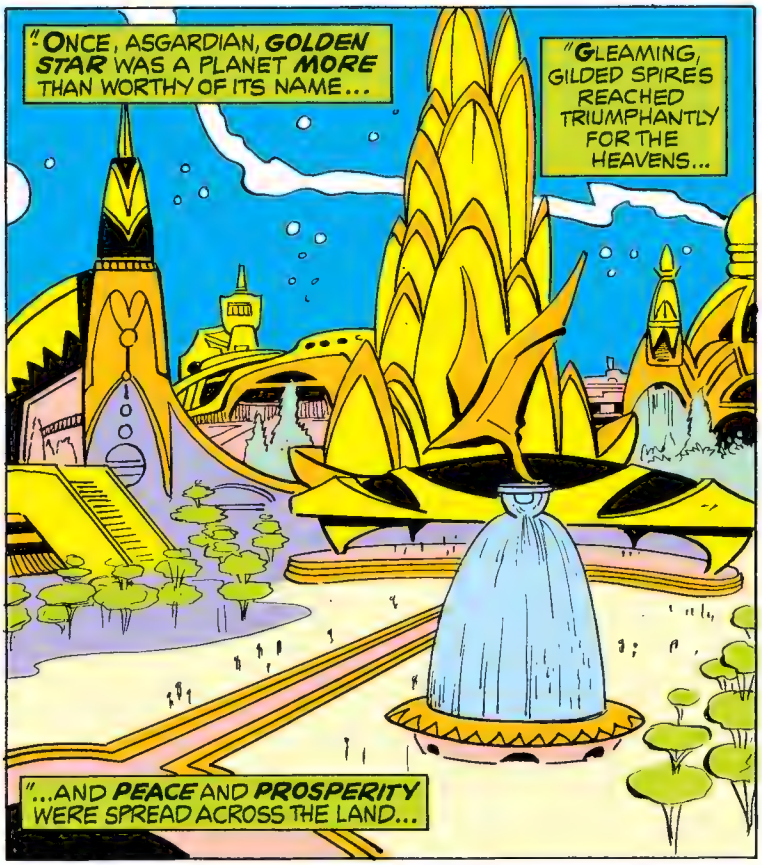

FOR WHAT FOUL PURPOSE, SCAVENGER?
SO THAT THOU CANST ATTEMPT TO SEPARATE US FROM OUR PURSES--OUR CLOAKS--OUR VERY BOOTS?
NAY, VERMIN--I WOULDST SOONER SEPARATE THY SCHEMING HEAD FROM THY SCRAWNY NECK!
TH-THUNDER GOD--P-PLEASE! I AM GREGOR--A FRIEND!
I SEEK ONLY TO HELP YOU--FOR I NEED YOUR HELP IN TURN!
OH, LITTLE ONE--AND HOW AM I TO KNOW IF THOU DOST DEIGN TO SPEAK THE TRUTH?
YOU NEED ONLY FOLLOW ME, THOR. IF THE FACES OF MY COMPATRIOTS DO NOT CONVINCE YOU I SPEAK SINCERELY--
--I HAVE RISKED MY LIFE FOR NOTHING!
FOR AN INSTANT, THE SON OF ODIN STUDIES GREGOR'S EARNEST FACE--THEN NODS SILENTLY--AND FOLLOWS THE TINY ALIEN INTO THE ALL-EMBRACING DARKNESS!
--THROUGH A PORTION OF THE DECAYING CITY THAT MAKES THE REST APPEAR MAGNIFICENT BY COMPARISON--
--AND FINALLY INTO THE SMOTHERING DEPTHS OF A CAVERN MOST CAREFULLY CONCEALED--
WE HAVE ARRIVED, THOR.
YOU THREE ARE THE FIRST OUTSIDERS EVER TO SET EYES UPON THIS HIDEAWAY!
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN BRING YOU, THUNDER GOD?
NAY, ALIEN--I DESIRE ONLY TO MEET THE COMPATRIOTS OF WHOM THOU SPOKE--
OUR FOOD SUPPLIES ARE MEAGER, BUT--
--OR BE THEY AS MEAGER AS THY FOODSTUFFS?
NAY, MILORD THOR--THEY BE NOT MEAGER BY ANY STANDARDS!


THEY COME CAUTIOUSLY AT FIRST, TO STARE IN DISBELIEF AT THE THREE POWERFUL NEW INTRUDERS--
---AND IN A FASHION, THIS IS STRANGE --FOR THEY ARE IN THEMSELVES A KALEIDEO-SCOPE OF LIFE--
--BEINGS OF EVERY IMAGINABLE COLOR AND CONFIGURATION, NO TWO IN THE LEAST ALIKE--
--SAVE FOR THE OVERWHELMING SORROW THAT TOUCHES THE EYES OF ALL!

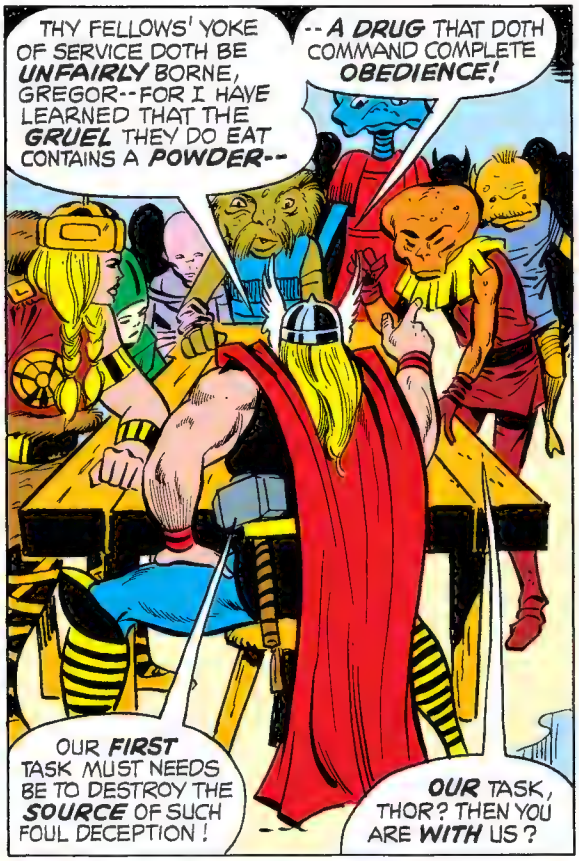

BROTHERS IN THE RESISTANCE, I PRESENT THOR, PRINCE OF ASGARD, AND HIS LOVELY COMPANIONS--WHO HAS COME TO JOIN OUR FIGHT FOR FREEDOM!
HOLD, GREGOR-- I HAVE NOT YET AGREED TO BE THINE ALLY!

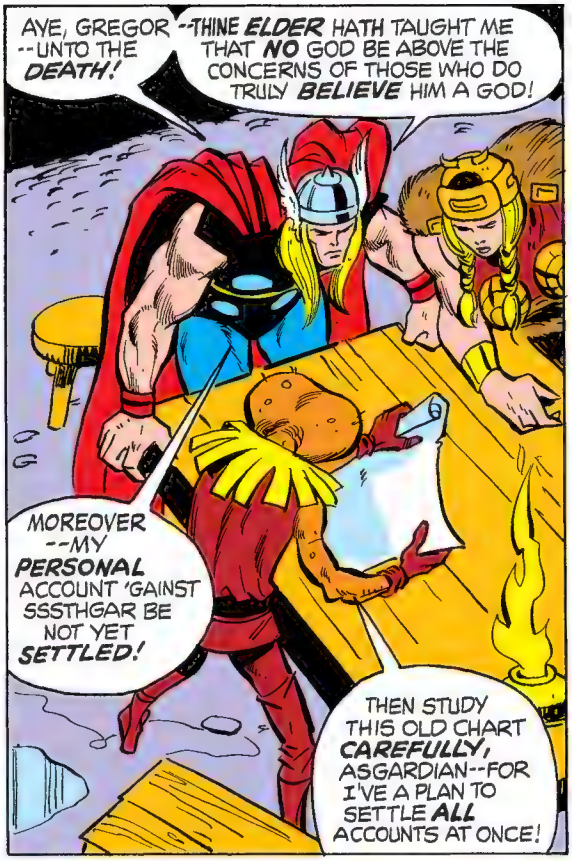

BUT YOU MUST, ASGARDIAN! I SAW WHAT YOU DID IN THE SLAVE MARKET THIS MORN--
--AND WE HAVE DIRE NEED OF STRENGTH SUCH AS YOURS!
THOU NEEDEST MORE THAN STRENGTH, ANCIENT ONE!

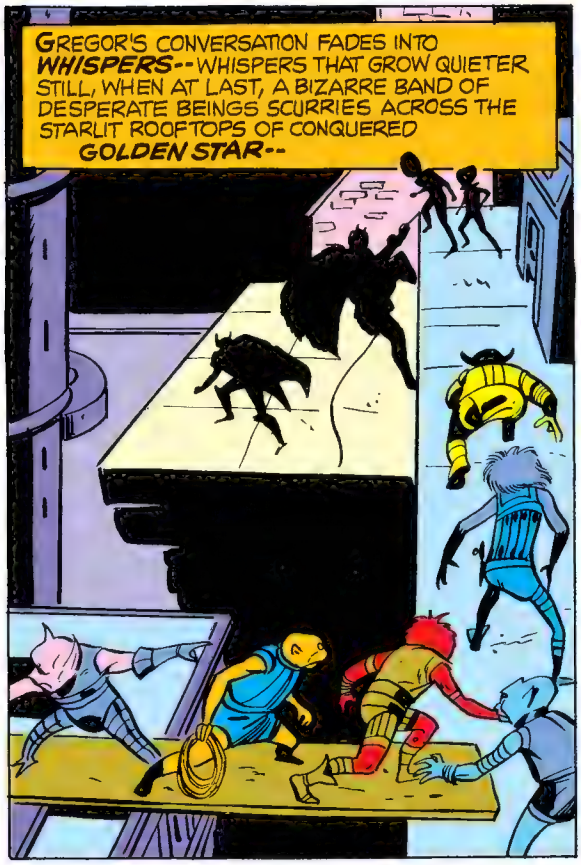
YOU FIND US DISTASTEFUL, THOR--WITH REASON, PERHAPS--
--BUT BE NOT SO SWIFT TO JUDGE US TILL YOU HAVE HEARD OUR TALE IN FULL--
--TILL YOU KNOW WHY WE ARE FORCED TO LIVE AS WE DO!


"ONCE, ASGARDIAN, GOLDEN STAR WAS A PLANET MORE THAN WORTHY OF ITS NAME...
"GLEAMING, GILDED SPIRES REACHED TRIUMPHANTLY FOR THE HEAVENS...
"...AND PEACE AND PROSPERITY WERE SPREAD ACROSS THE LAND...

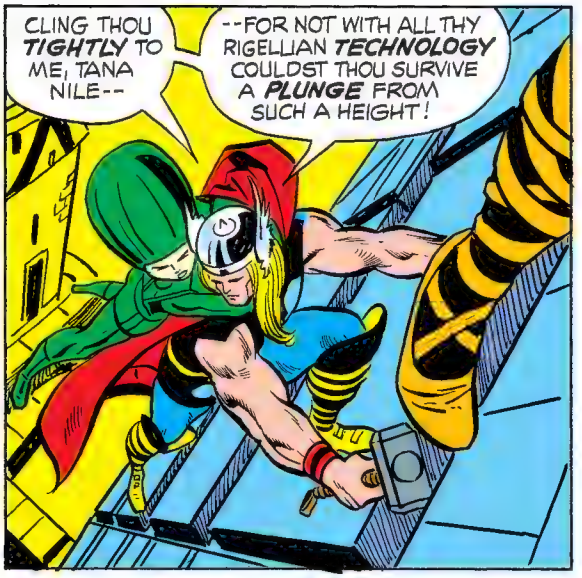
"GOLDEN STAR MIGHT HAVE AS EASILY BEEN CALLED PARADISE---
"--UNTIL THE STARSHIPS CAME!
"THEY HOVERED ABOVE OUR WORLD LIKE SHIMMERING CLOUDS OF DEATH--WHICH IN FACT, IS WHAT THEY WERE--
"--FOR, WHEREVER THEY PASSED, THEY RAINED CARNAGE AND DEVASTATION!
"IT WAS NOT UNTIL GOLDEN STAR LAY IN FLAMING RUINS THAT WE SAW OUR CONQUERORS' FACES--
"--THE FACES OF THE INSECT-LIKE VRELLNEXIANS--
"--AND THE LEERING VISAGE OF SSSTHGAR, LORD OF LIZARDS!
"THEY WERE SLAVE-TRADERS, OUR NEW-FOUND MASTERS--AND THEY WASTED NO TIME IN GATHERING NEW 'MERCHANDISE'--
"--BUT THOSE WHO WERE HERDED INTO THE STINKING SLAVE PENS WERE THE FORTUNATE ONES---
"--FOR THOSE WHO WERE NOT TAKEN BY SSSTHGAR AND HIS INSECTIAN PARTNERS WERE LEFT TO STARVE--
"--TO SCROUNGE IN THE GUTTERS FOR SCRAPS OF FOOD--
"--TO WALLOW IN THEIR OWN DEFEAT!"
DO YOU SEE NOW WHY WE BEG YOU TO JOIN US, ASGARDIAN --TO HELP US FREE OUR PEOPLE FROM SSSTHGAR'S YOKE OF SERVITUDE--?
HOW CAN YOU DENY US?
--AND STILL DARE TO CALL YOURSELF A GOD?


THY FELLOWS' YOKE OF SERVICE DOTH BE UNFAIRLY BORNE, GREGOR--FOR I HAVE LEARNED THAT THE GRUEL THEY DO EAT CONTAINS A POWDER--
--A DRUG THAT DOTH COMMAND COMPLETE OBEDIENCE!
OUR FIRST TASK MUST NEEDS BE TO DESTROY THE SOURCE OF SUCH FOUL DECEPTION!
OUR TASK, THOR? THEN YOU ARE WITH US?

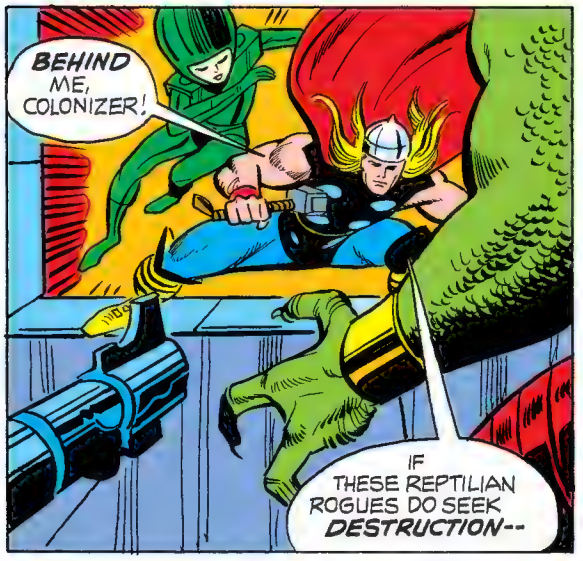

AYE, GREGOR --UNTO THE DEATH!
--THINE ELDER HATH TAUGHT ME THAT NO GOD BE ABOVE THE CONCERNS OF THOSE WHO DO TRULY BELIEVE HIM A GOD!
MOREOVER --MY PERSONAL ACCOUNT 'GAINST SSSTHGAR BE NOT YET SETTLED!
THEN STUDY THIS OLD CHART CAREFULLY, ASGARDIAN--FOR I'VE A PLAN TO SETTLE ALL ACCOUNTS AT ONCE!

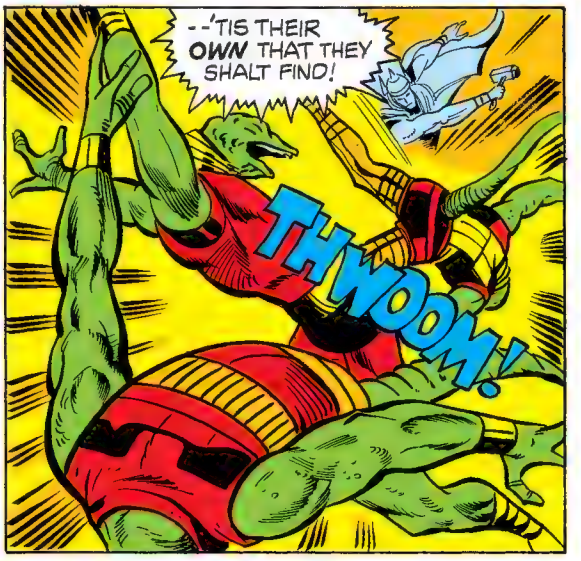

GREGOR'S CONVERSATION FADES INTO WHISPERS--WHISPERS THAT GROW QUIETER STILL, WHEN AT LAST, A BIZARRE BAND OF DESPERATE BEINGS SCURRIES ACROSS THE STARLIT ROOFTOPS OF CONQUERED GOLDEN STAR--

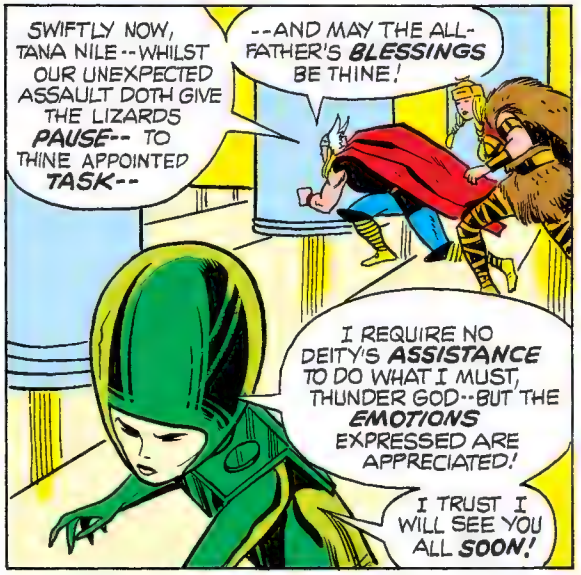
--THEN SUDDENLY SPLIT IN TWAIN--TO TRAVEL TWO SEPARATE-BUT-EQUALLY-IMPORTANT PATHS...
BEST LUCK WITH THY MISSION, LITTLE GREGOR --MAY THOU BE MOST SUCCESSFUL!
AS YOU, ASGARDIAN--AND YOU!

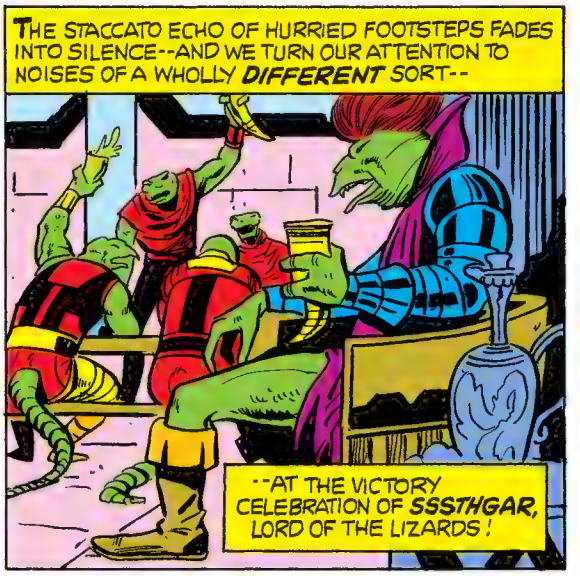

CLING THOU TIGHTLY TO ME, TANA NILE--
--FOR NOT WITH ALL THY RIGELLIAN TECHNOLOGY COULDST THOU SURVIVE A PLUNGE FROM SUCH A HEIGHT!

IT SEEMS YOU ARE MISTAKEN, THOR!
THE DESCENT HAS DONE US LITTLE HARM AT ALL.
IT IS OUR LANDING THAT WE MAY NOT SURVIVE!
BEHOLD --THE ESCAPED SLAVES!
QUICKLY-- AS LORD SSSTHGAR HAS ORDERED-- DESTROY THEM!


BEHIND ME, COLONIZER!
IF THESE REPTILIAN ROGUES DO SEEK DESTRUCTION--


--'TIS THEIR OWN THAT THEY SHALT FIND!
THWOOM!


SWIFTLY NOW, TANA NILE--WHILST OUR UNEXPECTED ASSAULT DOTH GIVE THE LIZARDS PAUSE-- TO THINE APPOINTED TASK--
--AND MAY THE ALL-FATHER'S BLESSINGS BE THINE!
I REQUIRE NO DEITY'S ASSISTANCE TO DO WHAT I MUST, THUNDER GOD--BUT THE EMOTIONS EXPRESSED ARE APPRECIATED!
I TRUST I WILL SEE YOU ALL SOON!


THE STACCATO ECHO OF HURRIED FOOTSTEPS FADES INTO SILENCE--AND WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO NOISES OF A WHOLLY DIFFERENT SORT--
--AT THE VICTORY CELEBRATION OF SSSTHGAR, LORD OF THE LIZARDS!

MY LADS, I WANT TO PROPOSE A TOAST TO OUR NEWEST AQUISITIONS--THOSE WHOSE SALE HAS MADE THIS PARTY POSSIBLE--!
TO THE EX-GODS OF FABLED ASGARD--THE FINEST SLAVES EVER TO GRACE THE BLOCK OF GOLDEN--
HAVE A CARE, LIZARD! IF THOU DOST FINISH THY TOAST--
--THOU SHALT NOT OWN A THROAT DOWN WHICH TO POUR IT!
WHO--?
YOU--THE ASGARDIAN WARRIOR WENCH--!
HER NAME BE HILDEGARDE, LIZARD-LORD--AS MINE DOTH BE THOR--
BUT WE STRIKE THIS TIME ONLY IN THE NAME OF OUR NOBLE LIEGE--!
QUICKLY, YOU FOOLS--SLAY THEM!
NAY, REPTILES--NO MORE! THIS BLOW DOTH BE STRUCK FOR ODIN--
--AND, YEA--FOR ASGARD!
ENOUGH, THUNDER GOD--YOU CAN BE HEARD THROUGHOUT THE CASTLE--!
I HAVE BROUGHT YOU YOUR FATHER AND FRIENDS AS INSTRUCTED--
--BUT WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS FOR THEM NOW?
TO THE DOCKS WITH THEM, RIGELLIAN--ONE AND ALL!
THE TIME HATH COME AT LAST TO LEAVE THIS MUCH-TARNISHED STAR!

AND SCANT MINUTES HENCE...
WHAT DIDST THOU WITH THOR'S LADY, THE RAVEN-HAIRED SIF?
SHE WAS NOT AMONGST THE OTHERS IN OUR RANKS.
A QUESTION BEFORE WE DEPART, FOUL LIZARD--
WHAT DOES IT MATTER TO YOU? YOU ARE ALL DOOMED ANYWAY!
NAY, SSSTHGAR--'TIS THOU WHO ART DOOMED--THOU AND THY MOST EVIL SCHEMES!
NO LONGER SHALT THOU HOLD THE INHABITANTS OF GOLDEN STAR IN SILENT SUBSERVIENCE--
--FOR YONDER FIERCE EXPLOSIONS DO SIGNAL THE DEATH OF THY SECRET DRUG FACTORIES--
--AND OF THY POWER!
NO--YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS! I'LL TELL YOU WHERE THE GIRL IS!
SHE AND HER SORCERESS COMPANION WERE SOLD TO MINERS OF THE DARK NEBULA SCANT HOURS BEFORE WE ARRIVED!
NOW PLEASE, THOR--YOU MUST TAKE ME WITH YOU!
THE PEOPLE OF GOLDEN STAR WILL SLAY ME ONCE THE DRUG WEARS OFF!
THEN I SUGGEST THOU DOST BEGIN RUNNING, SSSTHGAR--AS FAR AND AS FAST AS THOU CANST!
THERE BE NO ROOM FOR THEE 'PON THIS CRAFT!
IN TRUTH, I DO BELIEVE THERE BE NO ROOM FOR SUCH AS THEE--ANY-WHERE!
NO--WAIT! YOU CAN'T ABANDON ME LIKE THIS!
COME BACK--I COMMAND YOU--COME BACK!
YOU CAN'T DO THIS--DO YOU HEAR ME?
I AM SSSTHGAR--LORD OF THE LIZARDS!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND--?
I AM KING!
NEXT ISSUE: INTO THE DARK NEBULA!!

THOR
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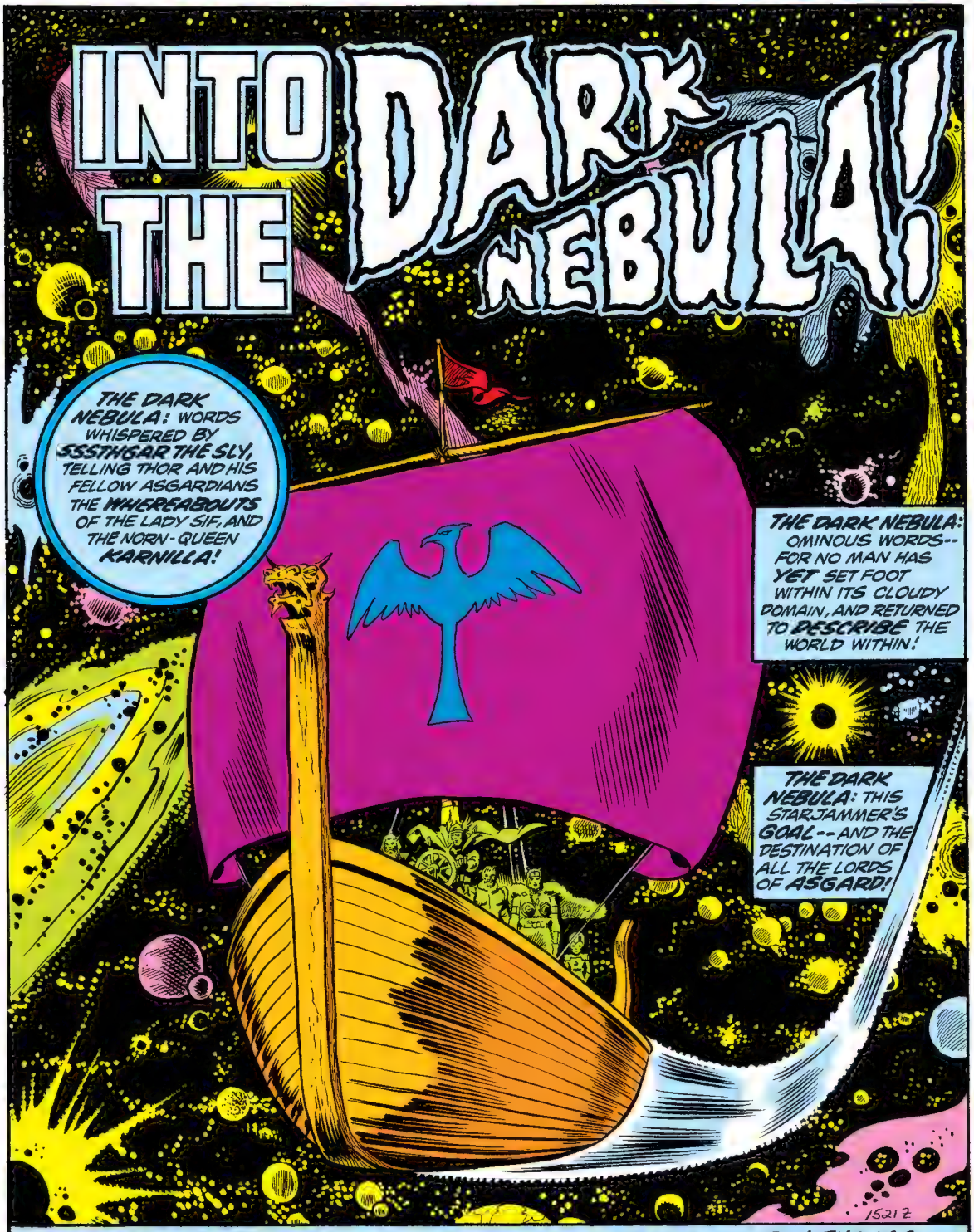
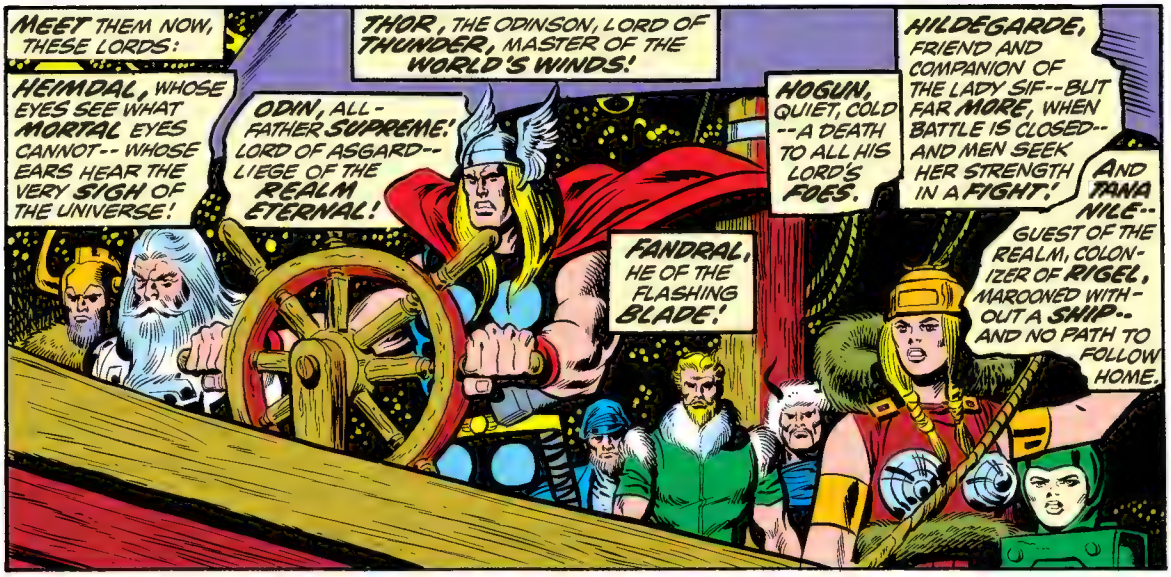
THE MIGHTY
THOR
NOT ALL THE GODS OF ASGARD MAY STAND AGAINST THE 4-D MAN--
--NO, NOT EVEN THE GOD OF THUNDER!
THEN, IF PERISH I MUST-- LET IT BE ALONGSIDE THE BODIES OF MY COMRADES--
--AND LET IT BE AFTER BATTLE WHICH DOTH SHAKE THE VERY COSMOS!!
INTO THE DARK NEBULA

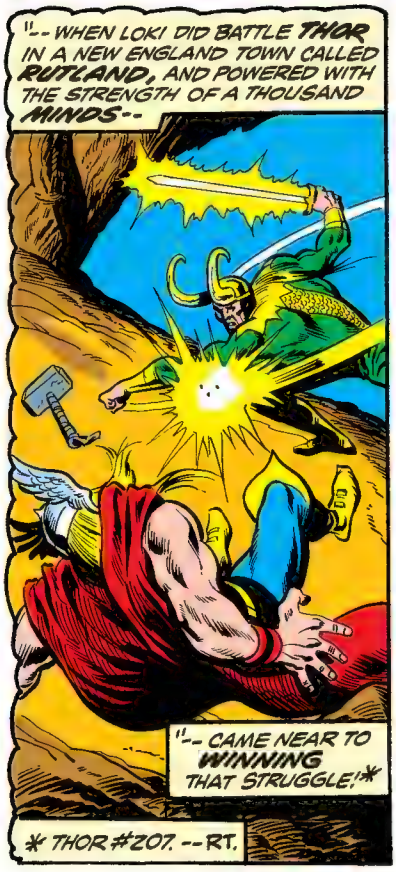
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™


INTO THE DARK NEBULA!
THE DARK NEBULA: WORDS WHISPERED BY SSSTHGAR THE SLY, TELLING THOR AND HIS FELLOW ASGARDIANS THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE LADY SIF, AND THE NORN-QUEEN KARNILLA!
THE DARK NEBULA: OMINOUS WORDS--FOR NO MAN HAS YET SET FOOT WITHIN ITS CLOUDY DOMAIN, AND RETURNED TO DESCRIBE THE WORLD WITHIN!
THE DARK NEBULA: THIS STARJAMMER'S GOAL--AND THE DESTINATION OF ALL THE LORDS OF ASGARD!
15217

GERRY CONWAY, SCRIPTER / SAL BUSCEMA, ARTIST / JIM MOONEY, INKER / JOHN COSTANZA, letterer / P. GOLDBERG, colorist / ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

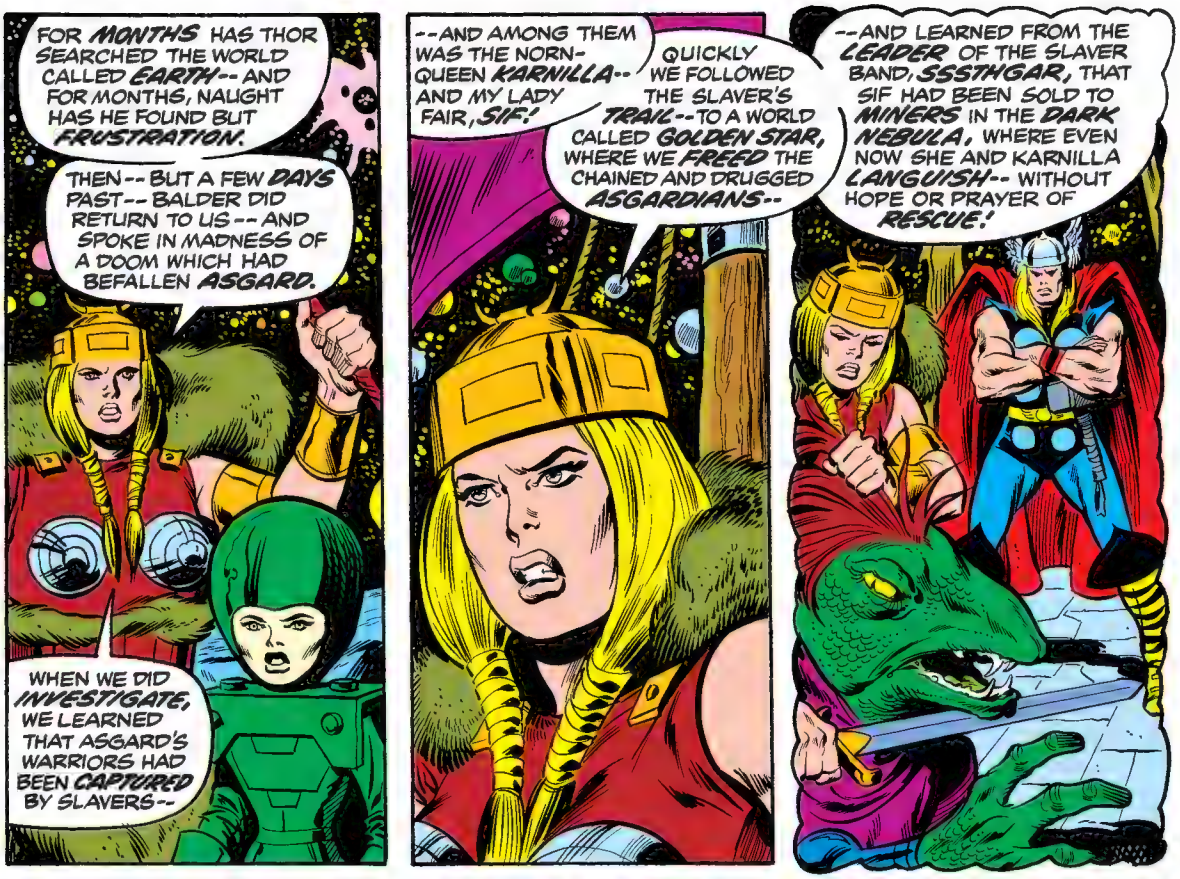

MEET THEM NOW, THESE LORDS:
HEIMDAL, WHOSE EYES SEE WHAT MORTAL EYES CANNOT-- WHOSE EARS HEAR THE VERY SIGH OF THE UNIVERSE!
ODIN, ALL-FATHER SUPREME! LORD OF ASGARD-- LIEGE OF THE REALM ETERNAL!
THOR, THE ODINSON, LORD OF THUNDER, MASTER OF THE WORLD'S WINDS!
FANDRAL, HE OF THE FLASHING BLADE!
HOGUN, QUIET, COLD --A DEATH TO ALL HIS LORD'S FOES.
HILDEGARDE, FRIEND AND COMPANION OF THE LADY SIF--BUT FAR MORE, WHEN BATTLE IS CLOSED-- AND MEN SEEK HER STRENGTH IN A FIGHT!
AND TANA NILE-- GUEST OF THE REALM, COLONIZER OF RIGEL, MAROONED WITHOUT A SHIP.. AND NO PATH TO FOLLOW HOME.

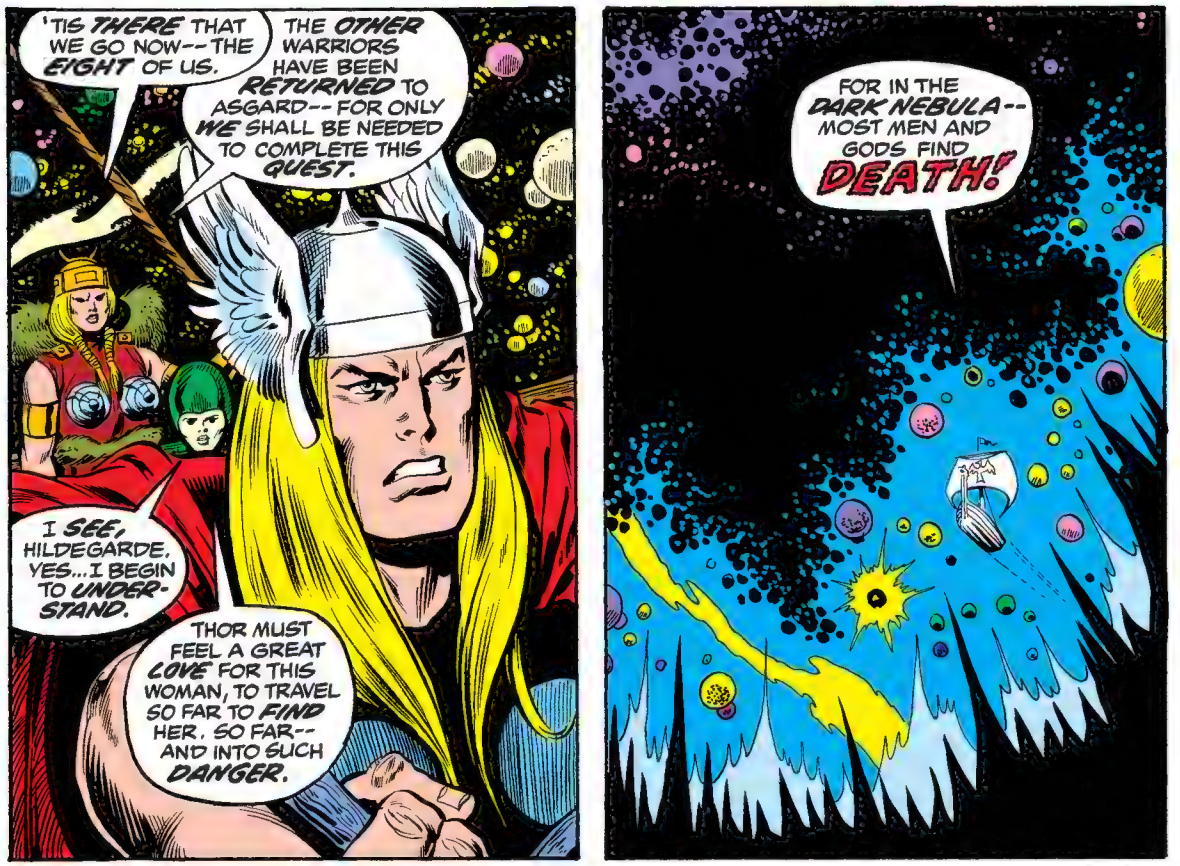
TELL ME, HILDEGARDE-- HOW CAME SIF TO VANISH?
AND WHAT PLACE DOES KARNILLA HAVE IN THE TALE?
THOU WERT NOT PRESENT, TANA NILE-- SO THOU DOST NOT KNOW WHAT TRANSPIRED THOSE MONTHS AGO--


"-- WHEN LOKI DID BATTLE THOR IN A NEW ENGLAND TOWN CALLED RUTLAND, AND POWERED WITH THE STRENGTH OF A THOUSAND MINDS--
"-- CAME NEAR TO WINNING THAT STRUGGLE!*
* THOR #207. --RT.

"IT SEEMED ONLY KARNILLA COULD SAVE THE THUNDER GOD WITH HER MAGIC--
"-- AND SHE DID SO, EXTRACTING FIRST A PROMISE THAT SIF WOULD ACCOMPANY HER ON HER QUEST FOR BALDER.

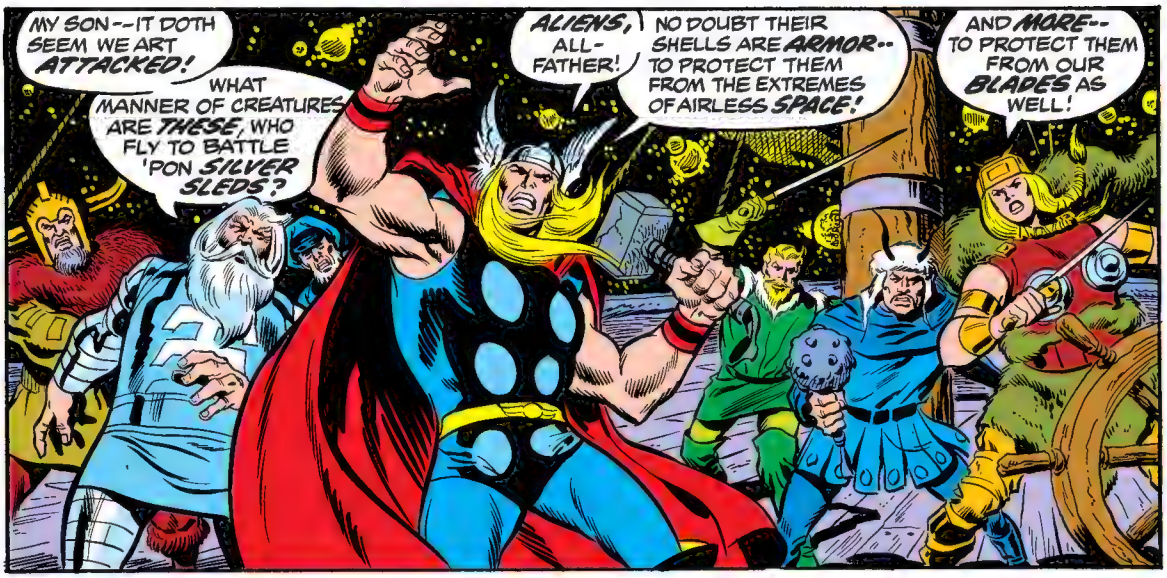
"THE BATTLE THEN WAS QUICKLY RESOLVED.
"KARNILLA CONJURED A STORM-- THOR USED THE ENERGIES SUMMONED--
"-- AND LOKI WAS DEFEATED, THE WORLD MADE SAFE ONCE MORE."

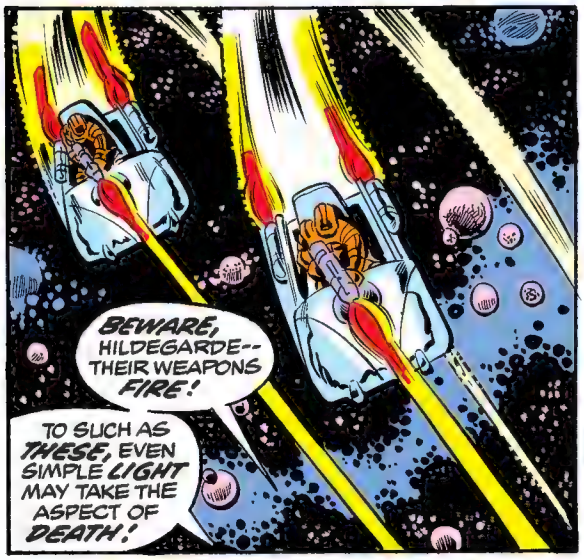

FOR MONTHS HAS THOR SEARCHED THE WORLD CALLED EARTH-- AND FOR MONTHS, NAUGHT HAS HE FOUND BUT FRUSTRATION.
THEN-- BUT A FEW DAYS PAST-- BALDER DID RETURN TO US-- AND SPOKE IN MADNESS OF A DOOM WHICH HAD BEFALLEN ASGARD.
WHEN WE DID INVESTIGATE, WE LEARNED THAT ASGARD'S WARRIORS HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY SLAVERS--
--AND AMONG THEM WAS THE NORN-QUEEN KARNILLA-- AND MY LADY FAIR, SIF!
QUICKLY WE FOLLOWED THE SLAVER'S TRAIL--TO A WORLD CALLED GOLDEN STAR, WHERE WE FREED THE CHAINED AND DRUGGED ASGARDIANS--
--AND LEARNED FROM THE LEADER OF THE SLAVER BAND, SSSTHGAR, THAT SIF HAD BEEN SOLD TO MINERS IN THE DARK NEBULA, WHERE EVEN NOW SHE AND KARNILLA LANGUISH-- WITHOUT HOPE OR PRAYER OF RESCUE!

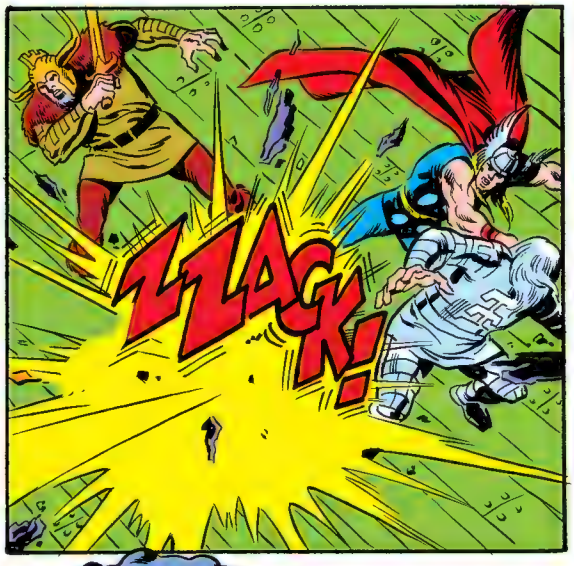

'TIS THERE THAT WE GO NOW-- THE EIGHT OF US.
THE OTHER WARRIORS HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO ASGARD-- FOR ONLY WE SHALL BE NEEDED TO COMPLETE THIS QUEST.
I SEE, HILDEGARDE. YES...I BEGIN TO UNDER-STAND.
THOR MUST FEEL A GREAT LOVE FOR THIS WOMAN, TO TRAVEL SO FAR TO FIND HER. SO FAR-- AND INTO SUCH DANGER.
FOR IN THE DARK NEBULA-- MOST MEN AND GODS FIND DEATH!

BUT, DANGER IS NO NEW EXPERIENCE FOR THE GODLING THOR.
HE THRIVES ON IT-- AS OTHER GODS THRIVE ON POWER.
AND IN THIS, THE GOD OF THUNDER IS NOT ALONE--
--FOR HIS FATHER ALSO WELCOMES THE APPROACHING MOMENT OF STRUGGLE--
--WHATEVER FORM IT MAY TAKE-- NATURAL OR--
--MAN-MADE!
THE RAIDERS! THEY'VE COME AGAIN--
JUST AS I SAID THEY WOULD!
WHAT SHALL WE DO THEN, KAGG? WAIT FOR THEM TO REACH US--
WAIT, UNTIL WE ARE AT THEIR MERCY-- AND ONLY THEN BEGIN RESISTANCE?
I SAY WE GO AFTER THEM NOW. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE THAT THEY MIGHT REACH THE JEWEL.
QUELLOR IS RIGHT, KAGG. WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
WE'VE BEEN FORTUNATE IN THE PAST-- WE'VE MANAGED TO REPEL THE RAIDERS BEFORE THEY REACHED OUR MINE.
WE CAN EXPECT NO SUCH LUCK THIS TIME-- I'M SURE OF IT.

VERY WELL, ROTHGAR. HAVE IT YOUR WAY.
I SHALL STAY HERE IN THE MINE-- THE TWO OF YOU, MAN THE SPACE SLEDS, AND GREET OUR UNWELCOME VISITORS!
DIS BE WITH YOU-- YOU'LL NEED HIS AID!
KAGG IS QUITE THE PESSIMIST, ROTHGAR.
PERHAPS WE SHOULD VOTE A NEW MINE FOREMAN--?
DON'T BE A FOOL. HE'S THE BEST ASTEROID ENGINEER IN THIS HALF OF THE GALAXY.
WE NEED HIM-- FOR THE JEWEL.
PERHAPS. EVEN SO-- I'D FEEL SAFER WITH ONE OF US PROTECTING OUR ASTEROID MINE.
KAGG IS TOO CONSERVATIVE FOR MY COMFORT-- I THINK HE FEELS A CERTAIN AFFINITY WITH THIS BLASTED NEBULA.
QUIET, QUELLOR.
OUR VISITORS ARE AHEAD..
--AND WE MUST BE PREPARED TO HELP THEM DIE!
HOGUN! LOOK THEE ABOVE--
ALREADY-- THE BATTLE DOTH BEGIN!
THEN LET IT!
HOGUN IS EVER READY FOR WAR!


MY SON--IT DOTH SEEM WE ART ATTACKED!
WHAT MANNER OF CREATURES ARE THESE, WHO FLY TO BATTLE 'PON SILVER SLEDS?
ALIENS, ALL-FATHER!
NO DOUBT THEIR SHELLS ARE ARMOR--TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE EXTREMES OF AIRLESS SPACE!
AND MORE--TO PROTECT THEM FROM OUR BLADES AS WELL!


BEWARE, HILDEGARDE--THEIR WEAPONS FIRE!
TO SUCH AS THESE, EVEN SIMPLE LIGHT MAY TAKE THE ASPECT OF DEATH!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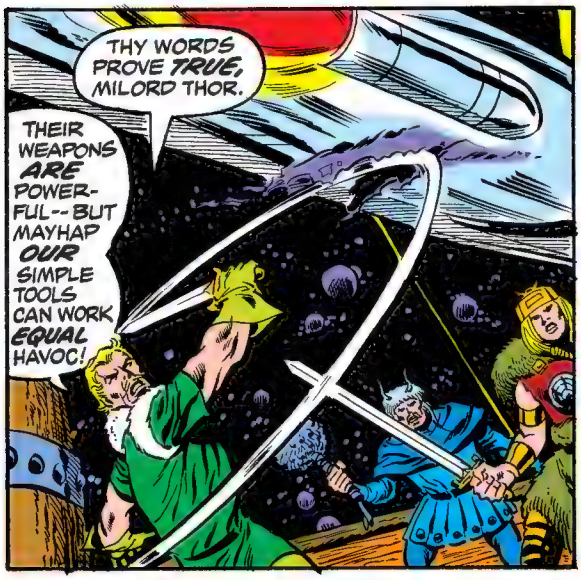
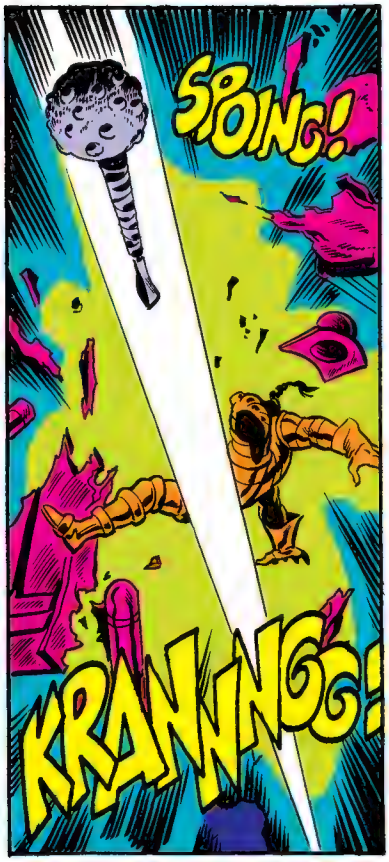
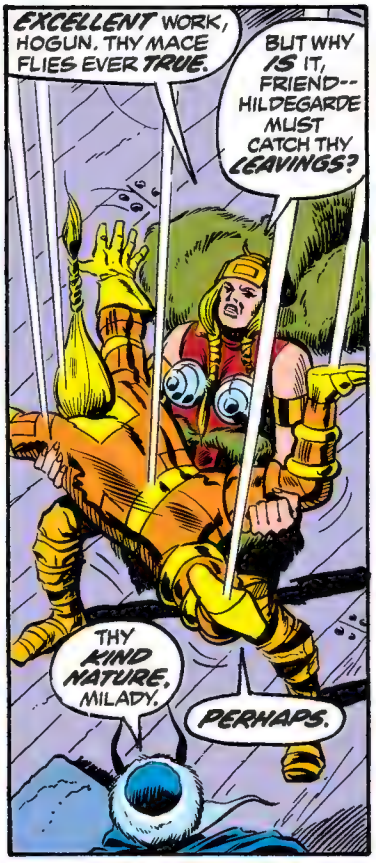
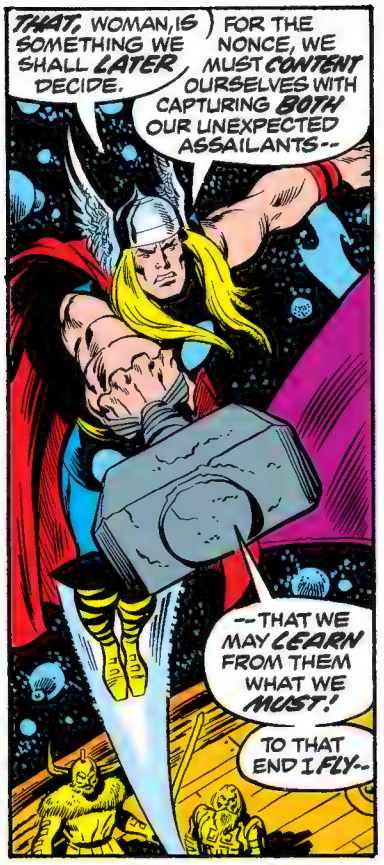

THY WORDS PROVE TRUE, MILORD THOR.
THEIR WEAPONS ARE POWERFUL--BUT MAYHAP OUR SIMPLE TOOLS CAN WORK EQUAL HAVOC!

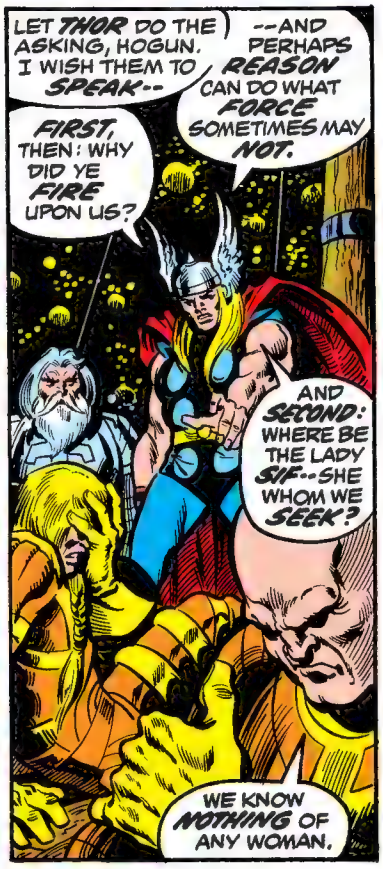
WHY, FRIEND FANDRAL--IT SEEMS THOU HAST LOST THY HUMOR.
DOST THOU THINK TO STEAL MY PLACE?
ONLY HOGUN MAY TRULY BE CALLED GRIM!



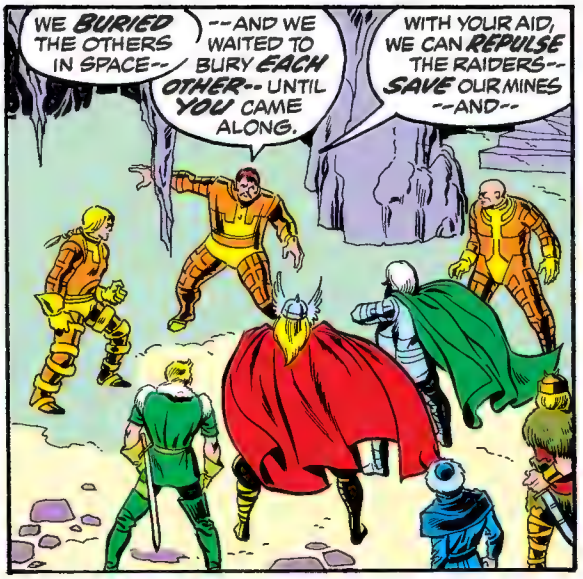

EXCELLENT WORK, HOGUN. THY MACE FLIES EVER TRUE.
BUT WHY IS IT, FRIEND-- HILDEGARDE MUST CATCH THY LEAVINGS?
THY KIND NATURE, MILADY.
PERHAPS.

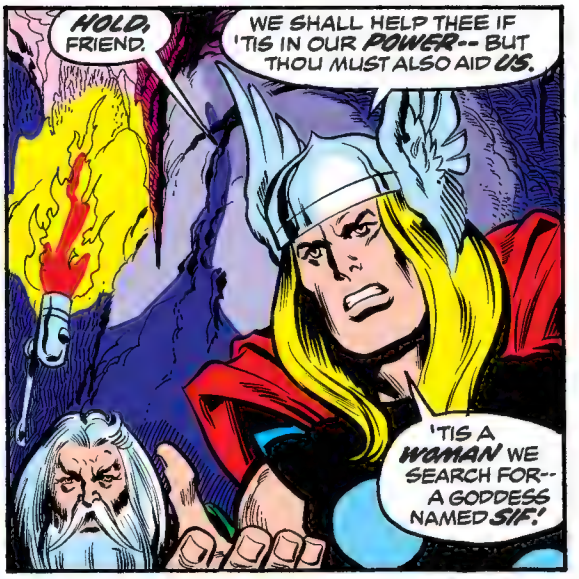

THAT, WOMAN, IS SOMETHING WE SHALL LATER DECIDE.
FOR THE NONCE, WE MUST CONTENT OURSELVES WITH CAPTURING BOTH OUR UNEXPECTED ASSAILANTS--
--THAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THEM WHAT WE MUST!
TO THAT END I FLY--

*DOUBTLESS, THERE ARE THOSE AMONG YOU WHO WILL QUESTION THE USE OF A SOUND EFFECT IN AIRLESS SPACE. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, EXPLANATIONS FOR SUCH AN OCCURRENCE BUT WE SHALL NOT BORE YOU BY RELATING THEM.
--GERRY & JOHNNY C.

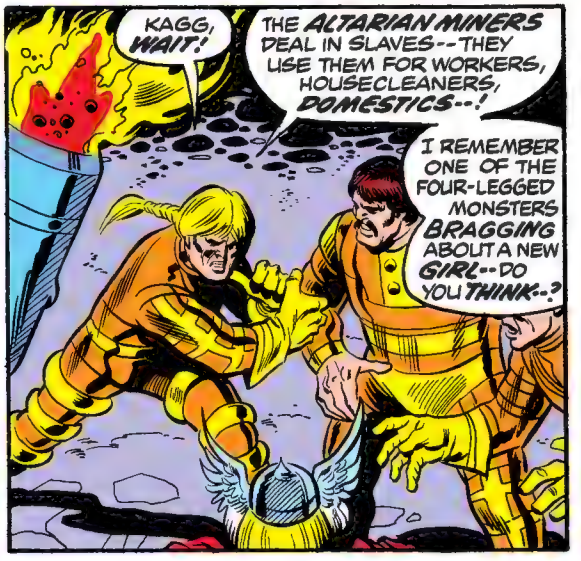

LET THOR DO THE ASKING, HOGUN. I WISH THEM TO SPEAK--
--AND PERHAPS REASON CAN DO WHAT FORCE SOMETIMES MAY NOT.
FIRST, THEN: WHY DID YE FIRE UPON US?
AND SECOND: WHERE BE THE LADY SIF--SHE WHOM WE SEEK?
WE KNOW NOTHING OF ANY WOMAN.

QUIET, QUELLOR--THEY ONLY WANT TO BAIT US.
THEIR TRUE DESIRE IS TO LEARN HOW MANY MEN THERE ARE AT OUR ASTEROID MINE.
THEN THEY WILL KNOW WHETHER TO ATTACK AT ONCE--
--OR WAIT FOR THEIR REINFORCEMENTS!
YOU'RE RIGHT, ROTHGAR.
THESE RAIDERS ARE A TRICKY LOT!
"RAIDERS"?
HOLD. IT APPEARS 'TIS SOME... MISUNDERSTANDING.
AFTER SOME EXCHANGED EXPLANATIONS, THE FULL STORY OF THE MINERS' EXPERIENCE COMES OUT, AND...
...THEN FOR THESE FEW WEEKS, THY MINE HAS BEEN BESIEGED!
YOU THOUGHT US PART OF THAT SIEGE--
-- AND UNTHINKING, ATTACKED!
TAKE US TO THY FOREMAN. PERHAPS WE CAN ASSIST EACH OTHER IN OUR QUESTS!
AND SO, SCANT MOMENTS LATER, IN THE ILL-LIT CAVERN WITHIN THE JAGGED BULK OF PLANETARY RUBBLE...
THEY ARE FRIENDS, KAGG. LORD ODIN AND HIS LIEGEMEN... FROM ASGARD!
BY DIS! THEN YOU ARE NO MYTH--
--BUT LIFE INCARNATE!
MEN HAVE CALLED ME AS MUCH, THOUGH AT THE MOMENT, MY STRENGTH IS BUT A SHADOW OF ITS TRUE SELF, DUE TO A TREACHEROUS DRUG MY BODY HAS NOT YET FULLY THROWN OFF--*
-- I AM INDEED ODIN, AND THESE ARE THE LORDS AND LADY OF ASGARD!
PLEASE FORGIVE YOUR RUDE RECEPTION, LORD ODIN. WE WERE EXPECTING OTHERS.
AS YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD, THESE PAST WEEKS HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR THE MINERS OF THE DARK NEBULA-- AND WE THREE ON ORION BASE SEEM TO HAVE HAD IT THE MOST DIFFICULT OF ALL.
ONCE THERE WERE SIXTY OF US--
ONLY QUELLOR, ROTHGAR AND A HANDFUL OF MEN REMAIN ALIVE.
*GIVEN HIM LAST ISSUE BY THE SLAVERS OF GOLDEN STAR. -- RT.

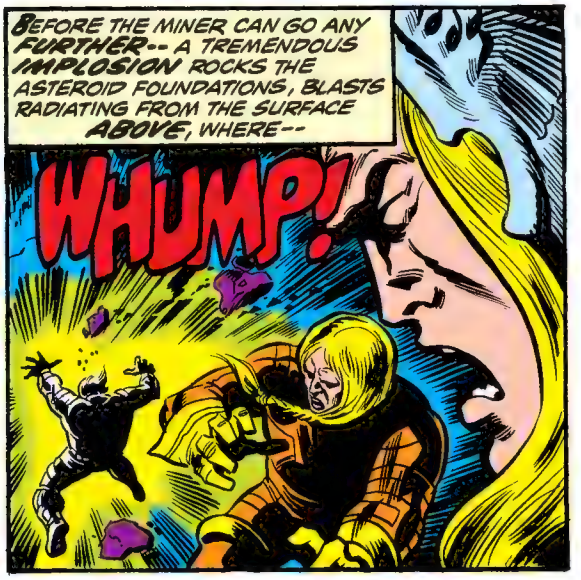

WE BURIED THE OTHERS IN SPACE--
--AND WE WAITED TO BURY EACH OTHER-- UNTIL YOU CAME ALONG.
WITH YOUR AID, WE CAN REPULSE THE RAIDERS-- SAVE OUR MINES --AND--

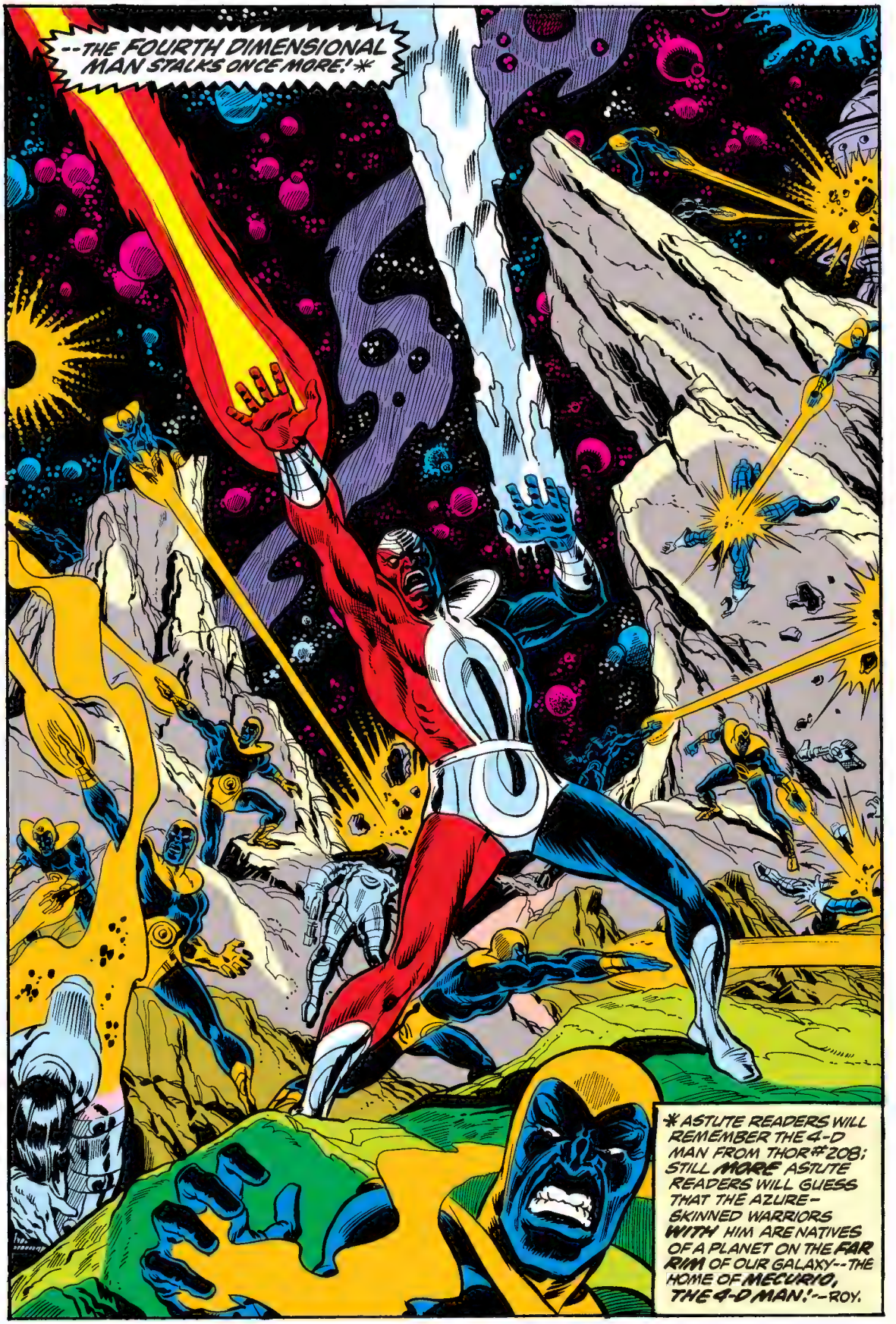

HOLD, FRIEND.
WE SHALL HELP THEE IF 'TIS IN OUR POWER-- BUT THOU MUST ALSO AID US.
'TIS A WOMAN WE SEARCH FOR-- A GODDESS NAMED SIF!

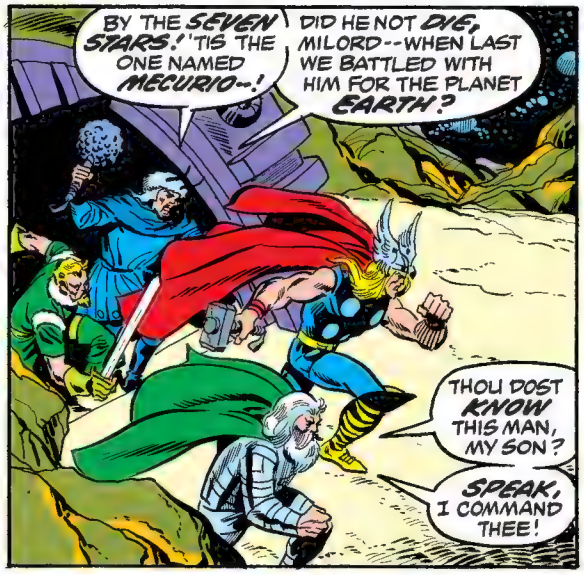
WE KNOW OF NO ONE BY THAT NAME.
IF SHE IS A SLAVE, PERHAPS ONE OF THE OTHER MINERS WOULD KNOW OF HER.
BUT IN THAT CASE, WE CAN NEVER--


KAGG, WAIT!
THE ALTARIAN MINERS DEAL IN SLAVES--THEY USE THEM FOR WORKERS, HOUSECLEANERS, DOMESTICS--!
I REMEMBER ONE OF THE FOUR-LEGGED MONSTERS BRAGGING ABOUT A NEW GIRL--DO YOU THINK--?

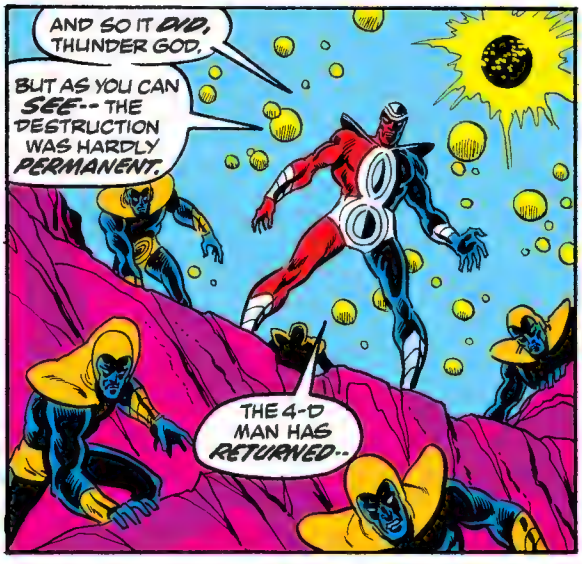
IT IS POSSIBLE.
COME, MY FRIENDS... AND WE WILL CHECK WITH THE ALTARIAN MINES.
I CAN PROMISE NOTHING, BUT PERHAPS--


BEFORE THE MINER CAN GO ANY FURTHER-- A TREMENDOUS IMPLOSION ROCKS THE ASTEROID FOUNDATIONS, BLASTS RADIATING FROM THE SURFACE ABOVE, WHERE--
WHUMP!

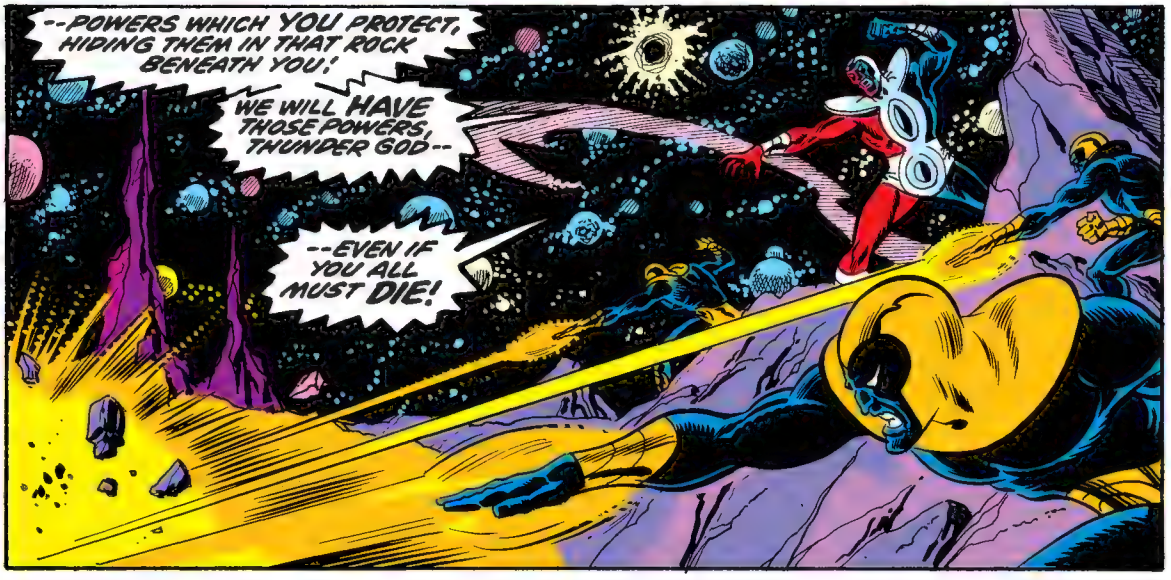

--THE FOURTH DIMENSIONAL MAN STALKS ONCE MORE!-*
*ASTUTE READERS WILL REMEMBER THE 4-D MAN FROM THOR #208; STILL MORE ASTUTE READERS WILL GUESS THAT THE AZURE-SKINNED WARRIORS WITH HIM ARE NATIVES OF A PLANET ON THE FAR RIM OF OUR GALAXY--THE HOME OF MECURIO, THE 4-D MAN!--ROY.


BY THE SEVEN STARS! 'TIS THE ONE NAMED MECURIO--!
DID HE NOT DIE, MILORD--WHEN LAST WE BATTLED WITH HIM FOR THE PLANET EARTH?
THOU DOST KNOW THIS MAN, MY SON?
SPEAK, I COMMAND THEE!

MY LIEGE, 'TIS BEYOND MY UNDERSTANDING.
THIS CREATURE IS PART HUMAN--PART ANTI-HUMAN. THE ENERGIES WITHIN HIM CAN EXPLODE IN BOTH HEAT AND COLD--
--AND SO WAS HE DE-STROYED, BY MIXING ONE WITH THE OTHER--
--EACH CANCELLING THE OTHER--AND CONSUMING HIM!

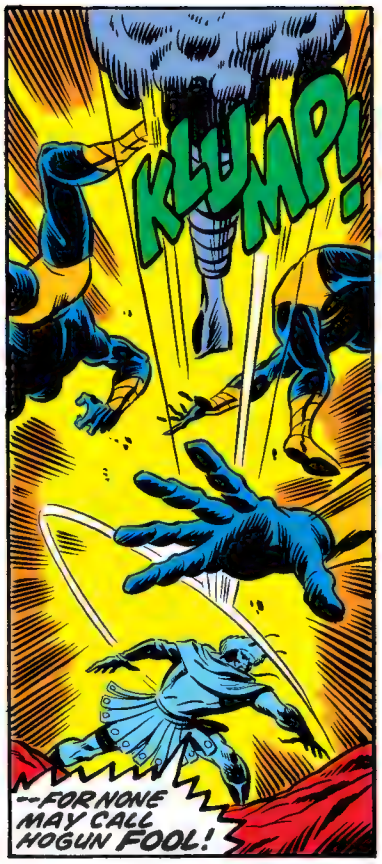

AND SO IT DID, THUNDER GOD.
BUT AS YOU CAN SEE-- THE DESTRUCTION WAS HARDLY PERMANENT.
THE 4-D MAN HAS RETURNED--

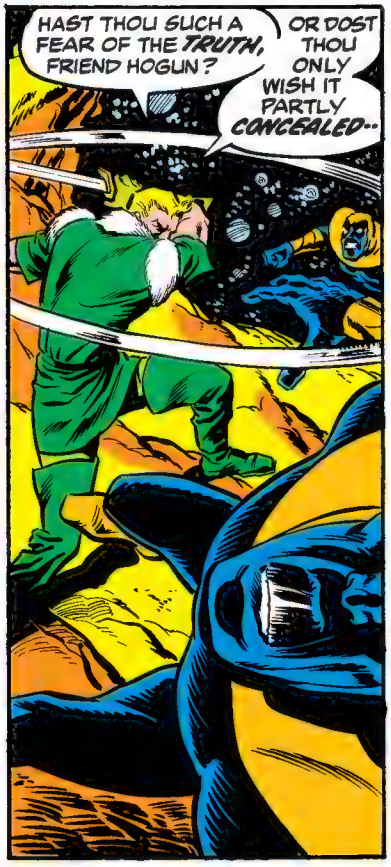
--AYE, RETURNED, TO SEIZE THE ONE ELEMENT IN THE UNIVERSE WHICH CAN SAVE MY HOME DIMENSION FROM EXTINCTION!
BEFORE, I THOUGHT ONLY EARTH'S ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELD WOULD DO THAT SAVING--
--BUT I WAS WRONG! THERE ARE OTHER POWERS I MAY USE--


--POWERS WHICH YOU PROTECT, HIDING THEM IN THAT ROCK BENEATH YOU!
WE WILL HAVE THOSE POWERS, THUNDER GOD--
--EVEN IF YOU ALL MUST DIE!

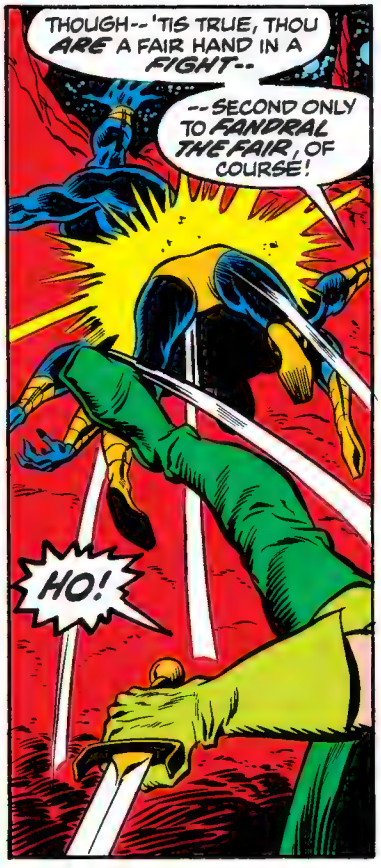
HISSSSS
CHUMP!
THOU DOST MOUTH MADNESS, DEMON!
WE HIDE NOTHING-- YET IF 'TIS A BATTLE THOU DOST SEEK--
THEN BATTLE SHALT THOU RECEIVE!

EXCELLENT, ASGARDIAN!
MECURIO HAS CLAIMED YOU FOR HIMSELF-- BUT YOUR FRIENDS ARE OUR GAME!
SUCH AS THIS MACE-WIELDING BUFFOON BEFORE US!
BUFFOON?
THOU SHALT REGRET THAT INFORMALITY, WRETCH--

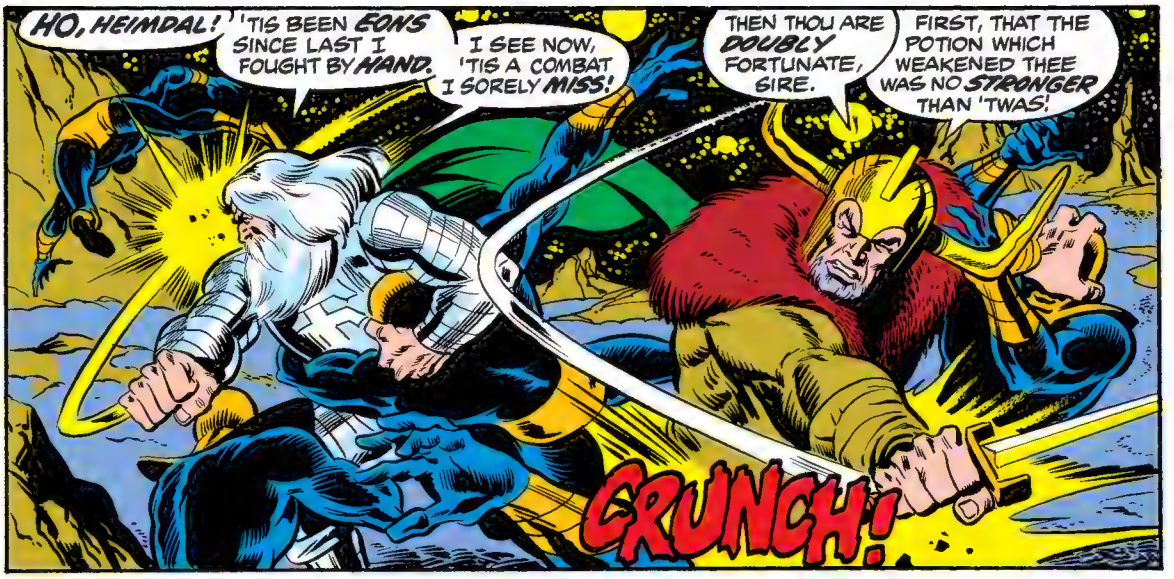

KLUMP!
--FOR NONE MAY CALL HOGUN FOOL!


HAST THOU SUCH A FEAR OF THE TRUTH, FRIEND HOGUN?
OR DOST THOU ONLY WISH IT PARTLY CONCEALED--

--KNOWN TO THY FRIENDS ALONE!
SWAK!

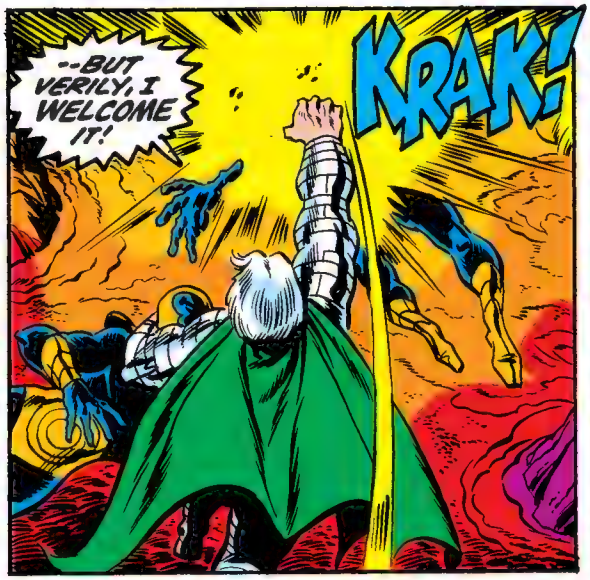

THOUGH-- 'TIS TRUE, THOU ARE A FAIR HAND IN A FIGHT--
--SECOND ONLY TO FANDRAL THE FAIR, OF COURSE!
HO!

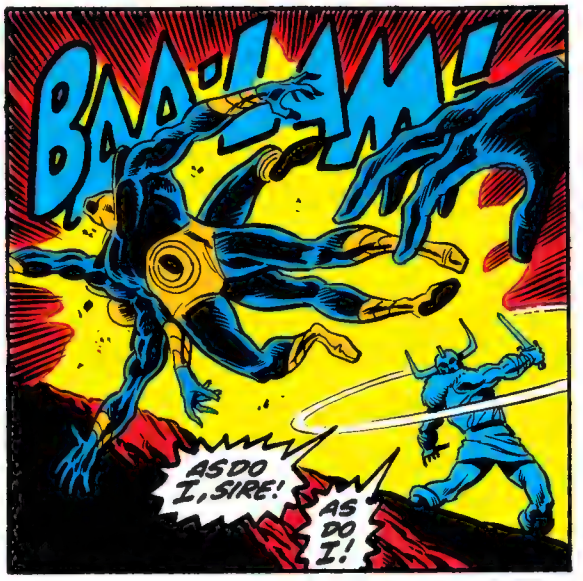
STRIFE IN THE RANKS, THUNDER GOD?
YOUR MEN SEEM QUITE ANTAGONISTIC-- HMMM?
'TIS A TRUE SIGN OF INSANITY-- THAT THE MAD ARE SO WHOLLY WITHOUT HUMOR!
NONE THERE ARE WHO HAVE GREATER FRIENDSHIP THAN FANDRAL AND HOGUN--
-- EACH WOULD DIE FOR THE OTHER--
-- WITHOUT QUESTION--OR DESPAIR!
NONSENSE! WHAT MEANING HAS FRIENDSHIP-- BETWEEN MEN SOON DEAD?
TO SUCH AS THEE, MECURIO--
'TIS AS ALIEN AS THE MEANING OF HONOR!
I'LL TALK NO MORE, ASGARDIAN!
WITHOUT DOUBT--YOU CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND WHAT DRIVES ME--
-- FOR IF IT IS NOT HONOR-- IF IT IS NOT MY DUTY TO MY PLANET AND ITS DIMENSION--
-- THEN TRULY I AM A MAN MAD--
--AND THE WHOLE WORLD WITH ME!
WHUNK!

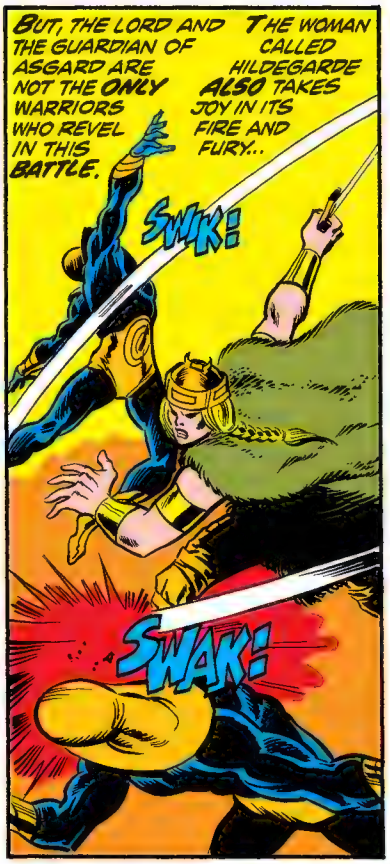

HO, HEIMDAL!
'TIS BEEN EONS SINCE LAST I FOUGHT BY HAND.
I SEE NOW, 'TIS A COMBAT I SORELY MISS!
THEN THOU ARE DOUBLY FORTUNATE, SIRE.
FIRST, THAT THE POTION WHICH WEAKENED THEE WAS NO STRONGER THAN 'TWAS!
CRUNCH!

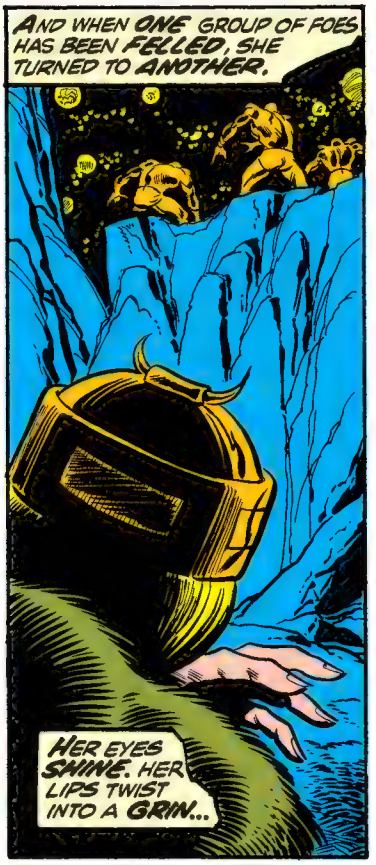
AND SECOND, THAT IT LEFT THEE WITH STRENGTH ENOW-- TO BATTLE DEBRIS SUCH AS THESE!

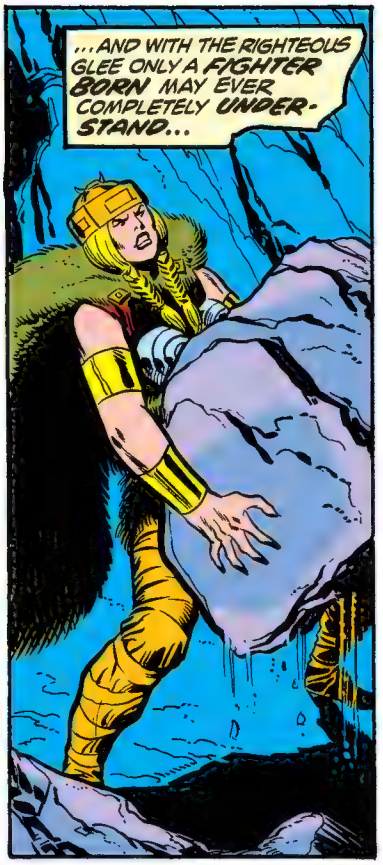
'TIS AN ODD FORTUNE, HEIMDAL--
SHUNT!

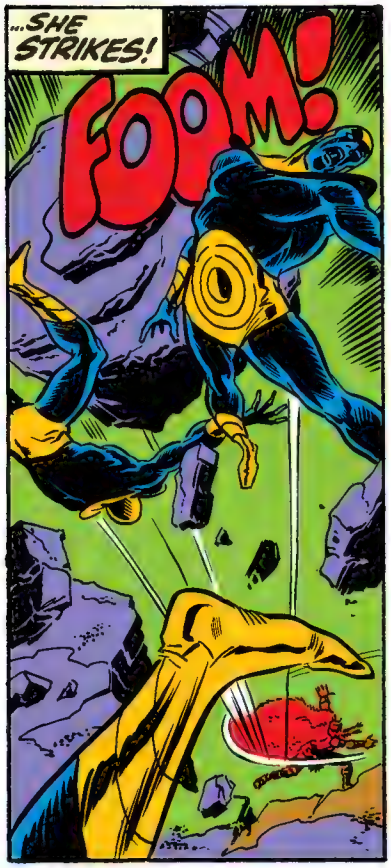

--BUT VERILY, I WELCOME IT!
KRAK!

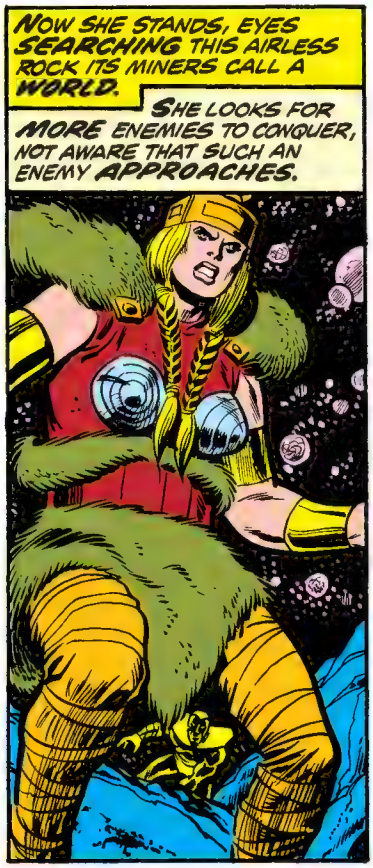

BAA-LAM!
AS DO I, SIRE!
AS DO I!

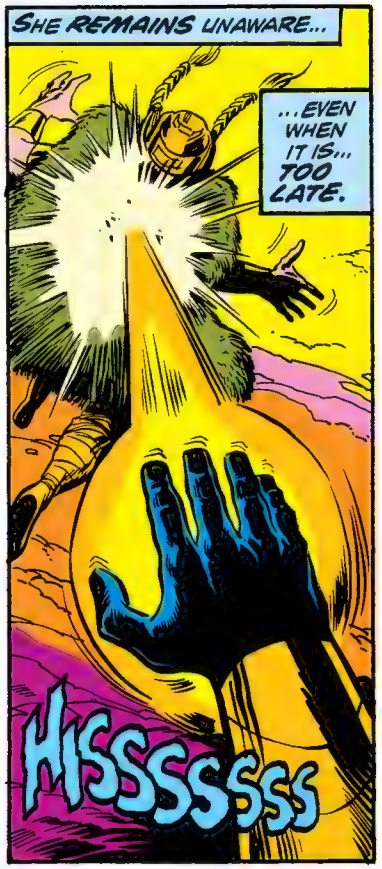

BUT, THE LORD AND THE GUARDIAN OF ASGARD ARE NOT THE ONLY WARRIORS WHO REVEL IN THIS BATTLE.
THE WOMAN CALLED HILDEGARDE ALSO TAKES JOY IN ITS FIRE AND FURY...
SWIK!
SWAK!

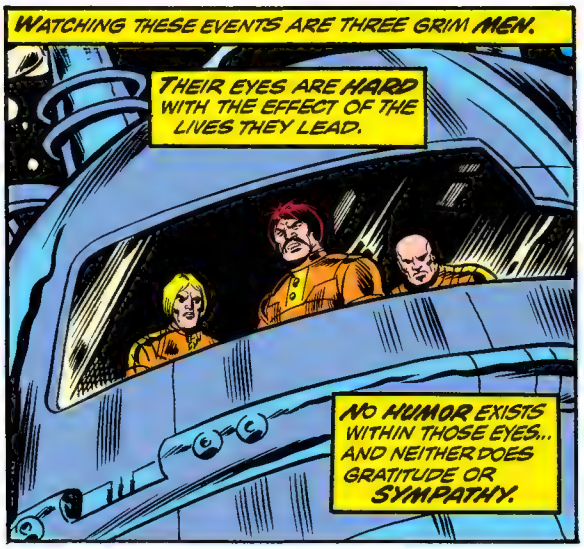

AND WHEN ONE GROUP OF FOES HAS BEEN FELLED, SHE TURNED TO ANOTHER.
HER EYES SHINE. HER LIPS TWIST INTO A GRIN...


...AND WITH THE RIGHTEOUS GLEE ONLY A FIGHTER BORN MAY EVER COMPLETELY UNDER-STAND...

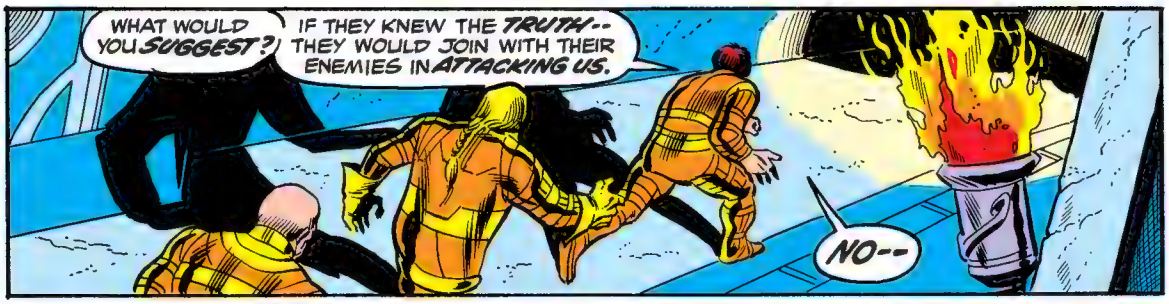

...SHE STRIKES!
FOOM!


NOW SHE STANDS, EYES SEARCHING THIS AIRLESS ROCK ITS MINERS CALL A WORLD.
SHE LOOKS FOR MORE ENEMIES TO CONQUER, NOT AWARE THAT SUCH AN ENEMY APPROACHES.

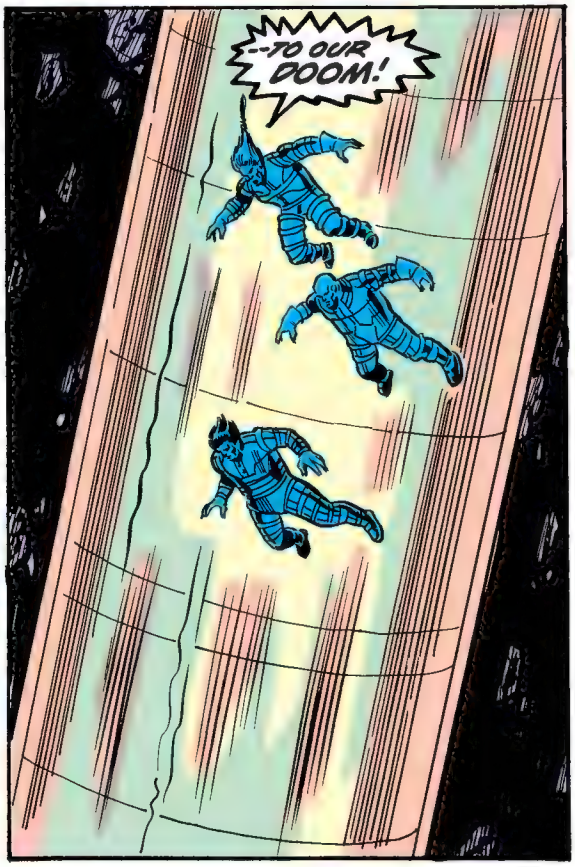

SHE REMAINS UNAWARE...
...EVEN WHEN IT IS... TOO LATE.
HISSSSSSS


WATCHING THESE EVENTS ARE THREE GRIM MEN.
THEIR EYES ARE HARD WITH THE EFFECT OF THE LIVES THEY LEAD.
NO HUMOR EXISTS WITHIN THOSE EYES... AND NEITHER DOES GRATITUDE OR SYMPATHY.

THERE IS ONLY COLD CALCULATION, AND AFTER SEVERAL MOMENTS, THE RESULT OF THAT CALCULATION IS DULY ANNOUNCED...
WE MUST SAVE THE JEWEL.
WE HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE.
BUT THE ASGARDIANS-- YOU WOULD ABANDON THEM, KAGG?

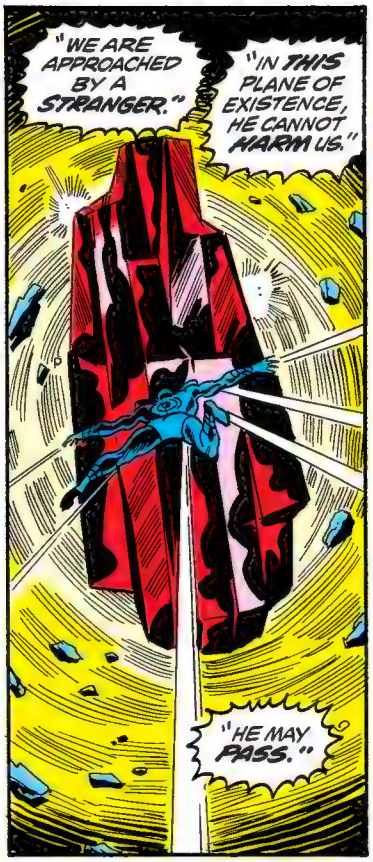

WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST?
IF THEY KNEW THE TRUTH-- THEY WOULD JOIN WITH THEIR ENEMIES IN ATTACKING US.
NO--

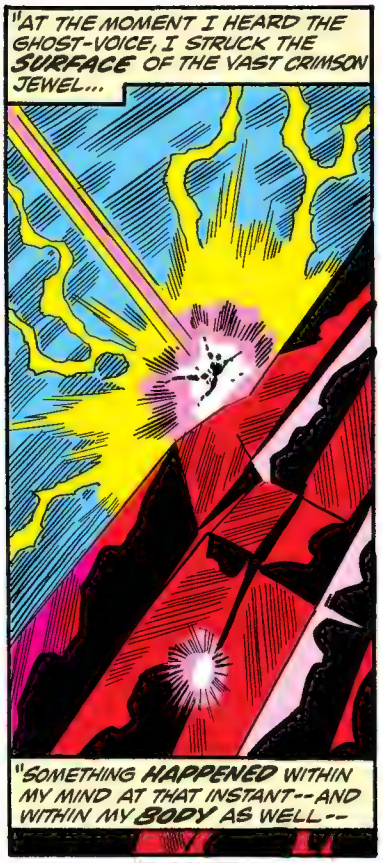
OUR ONLY CHANCE LIES WITH THE JEWEL.
WE MUST SURRENDER OUR WILLS, WE MUST PROVIDE IT WITH THE POWER WHICH IT NEEDS TO SAVE ALL OF US-- REGARDLESS OF WHAT THAT MEANS TO THE ASGARDIANS, AND THE WOMAN FOR WHOM THEY SEARCH.
THESE PAST YEARS HAVE BEEN LONG AND LONELY, MY FRIENDS--
I'LL NOT SEE THEM WASTED BY OUR FORMER ALLIES-- WOULD YOU?
CURSE YOU, KAGG. WHAT CHOICE HAVE WE?
WE ARE FOOLS AS GREAT AS YOU ARE! LEAD US, KAGG--

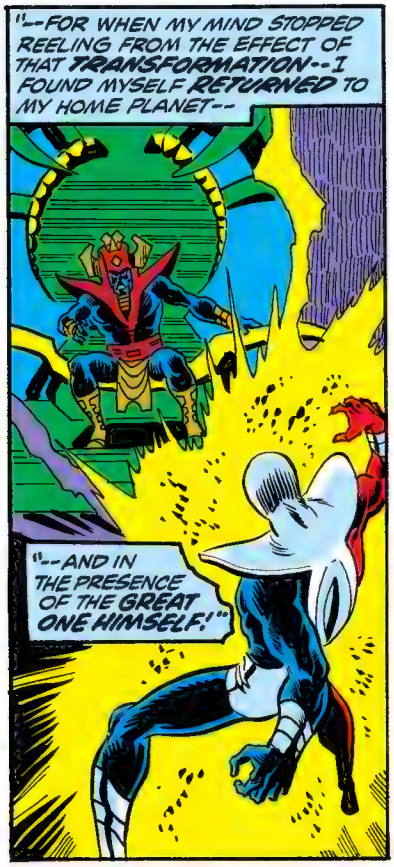

--TO OUR DOOM!

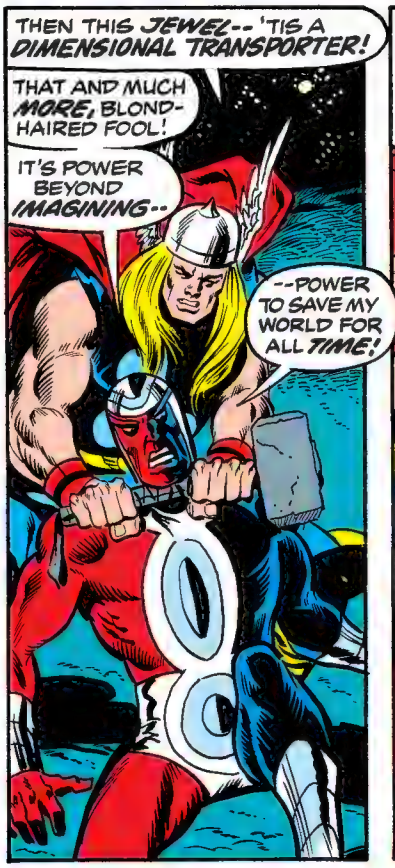
--YOUR DOOM, ASGARDIAN! YOUR POWERS ARE NOTHING COMPARED TO MINE!
IN MY RIGHT HAND, I HOLD THE FREEZING POWER OF INFINITE SPACE!
AND IN MY LEFT-- THE FIRE OF A BILLION STARS!
AND IN MY HAND, MECURIO, I HOLD MJOLNIR--
MJOLNIR, FORGED IN THE FURNACES OF GIERRODUR THE TROLL-- THE MYSTIC MALLET SUPREME--
--WHICH MAY STRIKE WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHTNING!
AND WHICH WILL WITH-STAND-- THE FARTHEST EXTREMES OF HEAT AND COLD!
NOW, MECURIO-- PERHAPS 'TIS TIME THOU DOST SPEAK.
DO IT QUICKLY, VILLAIN... 'LEST I LOSE PATIENCE WITH THEE!
VERY WELL, THUNDER GOD. LISTEN CLOSELY, FOR I'LL ONLY TELL IT ONCE.
AND AFTER THAT-- YOU'LL DIE!
"AS I SAID, I DIED WHEN YOU TRAPPED THE TEMPERATURE EXTREMES OF MY BODY--
"--BUT IT WAS NOT DEATH AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT IT.
"INSTEAD OF PASSING TO ETERNITY, I WAS THROWN TO ANOTHER LEVEL OF SPACE--
"--WHERE I FOUND MYSELF CAUGHT IN A MYSTIC WHIRL-POOL, DRAWN TO A DESTINATION BEYOND MEAGER MORTAL UNDER-STANDING!

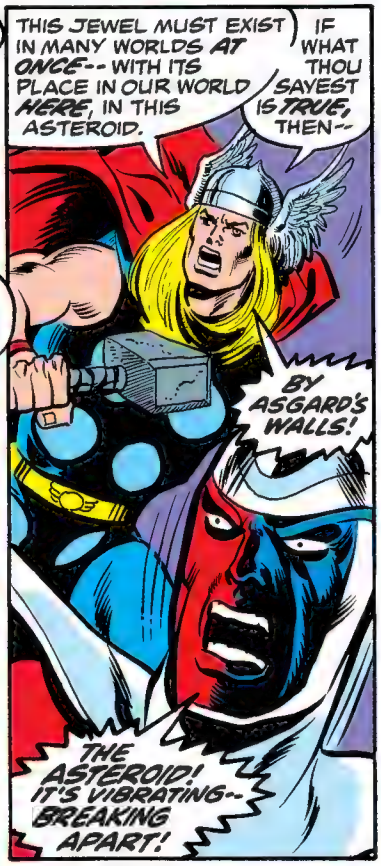
"YOUR MIND CANNOT CONCEIVE THE TERROR I FELT, THOR. I FREELY ADMIT IT--I WAS FRIGHTENED TO INSANITY, AND SO YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN--
"--IF YOU'D HEARD WHAT I NEXT HEARD, AND SAW WHAT I SAW!

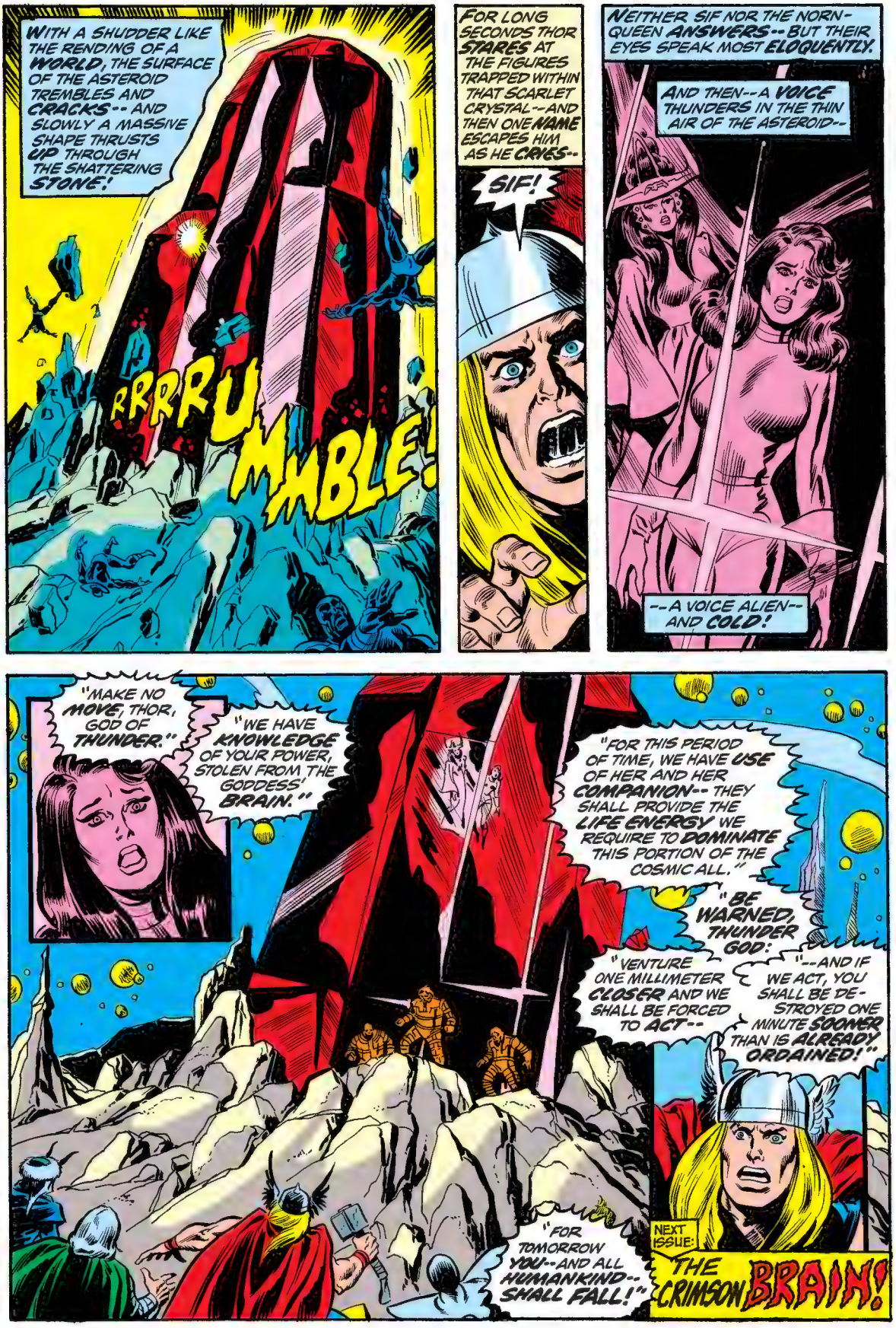

"WE ARE APPROACHED BY A STRANGER."
"IN THIS PLANE OF EXISTENCE, HE CANNOT HARM US."
"HE MAY PASS."


"AT THE MOMENT I HEARD THE GHOST-VOICE, I STRUCK THE SURFACE OF THE VAST CRIMSON JEWEL...
"SOMETHING HAPPENED WITHIN MY MIND AT THAT INSTANT--AND WITHIN MY BODY AS WELL--


"--FOR WHEN MY MIND STOPPED REELING FROM THE EFFECT OF THAT TRANSFORMATION--I FOUND MYSELF RETURNED TO MY HOME PLANET--
"--AND IN THE PRESENCE OF THE GREAT ONE HIMSELF!"


THEN THIS JEWEL--'TIS A DIMENSIONAL TRANSPORTER!
THAT AND MUCH MORE, BLOND-HAIRED FOOL!
IT'S POWER BEYOND IMAGINING--
--POWER TO SAVE MY WORLD FOR ALL TIME!


THIS JEWEL MUST EXIST IN MANY WORLDS AT ONCE--WITH ITS PLACE IN OUR WORLD HERE, IN THIS ASTEROID.
IF WHAT THOU SAYEST IS TRUE, THEN--
BY ASGARD'S WALLS!
THE ASTEROID! IT'S VIBRATING--BREAKING APART!


WITH A SHUDDER LIKE THE RENDING OF A WORLD, THE SURFACE OF THE ASTEROID TREMBLES AND CRACKS-- AND SLOWLY A MASSIVE SHAPE THRUSTS UP THROUGH THE SHATTERING STONE!
RRRRUMBLE!
FOR LONG SECONDS THOR STARES AT THE FIGURES TRAPPED WITHIN THAT SCARLET CRYSTAL--AND THEN ONE NAME ESCAPES HIM AS HE CRIES--
SIF!
NEITHER SIF NOR THE NORN-QUEEN ANSWERS-- BUT THEIR EYES SPEAK MOST ELOQUENTLY.
AND THEN--A VOICE THUNDERS IN THE THIN AIR OF THE ASTEROID--
--A VOICE ALIEN-- AND COLD!
"MAKE NO MOVE, THOR, GOD OF THUNDER."
"WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR POWER, STOLEN FROM THE GODDESS' BRAIN."
"FOR THIS PERIOD OF TIME, WE HAVE USE OF HER AND HER COMPANION-- THEY SHALL PROVIDE THE LIFE ENERGY WE REQUIRE TO DOMINATE THIS PORTION OF THE COSMIC ALL."
"BE WARNED, THUNDER GOD:
"VENTURE ONE MILLIMETER CLOSER AND WE SHALL BE FORCED TO ACT--
"--AND IF WE ACT, YOU SHALL BE DESTROYED ONE MINUTE SOONER THAN IS ALREADY ORDAINED!"
"FOR TOMORROW YOU--AND ALL HUMANKIND--SHALL FALL!"
NEXT ISSUE:
THE CRIMSON BRAIN!

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THE MIGHTY
THOR®
™
DESPAIR NOT, MY LADY SIF!
I SHALL FREE THEE FROM THESE BINDING CRYSTALS WHICH--
NAY, GOD OF THUNDER-- YOU'LL NOT FREE HER!
THUS SPEAKS XORR, SPAWNER OF WORLDS!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

THE GOD IN THE JEWEL
WITNESS THESE FACES OF FEAR.
ONE SPLIT INSTANT AGO, THESE WARRIORS RODE THE CREST OF VICTORY.
NOW, GODS OF ASGARD AND THEIR DARK WORLD FOES ALIKE FIND THEMSELVES THROWN FROM THE HEIGHTS OF SUCCESS--TO THE DEPTHS OF DEFEAT!
THEY CAN ONLY STARE AT THE CAUSE OF THEIR REVERSAL...
STARE... AND WONDER IF THEY HAVE, AFTER ALL, GONE MAD!

GERRY CONWAY, SCRIPTER * JOHN BUSCEMA & JIM MOONEY, ARTISTS EXEMPLAR * JOHN COSTANZA, letterer STAN G., colorist

ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

154-2-Z

"MAKE NO MOVE, THOR, GOD OF THUNDER!

"WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR POWER, STOLEN FROM THE GODDESS' SIF'S MORE THAN INFORMATIVE BRAIN!

"FOR THIS PERIOD OF TIME, WE HAVE USE OF HER AND HER COMPANION, THE WITCH CALLED KARNILLA... THEY SHALL PROVIDE THE LIFE ENERGY WE REQUIRE TO DOMINATE THIS PORTION OF THE COSMIC ALL.

"SO BE WARNED, THUNDER GOD:

"I VENTURE ONE MILLIMETER CLOSER AND WE SHALL BE FORCED TO ACT--

"--AND IF WE ACT, YOU SHALL BE DESTROYED ONE MINUTE SOONER THAN IS ALREADY ORDAINED!

"NOW LISTEN-- AND HEED THE WORDS OF OUR HUMANOID PROTEGES--IF EVER YOU WOULD SEE TOMORROW'S DAWN!"

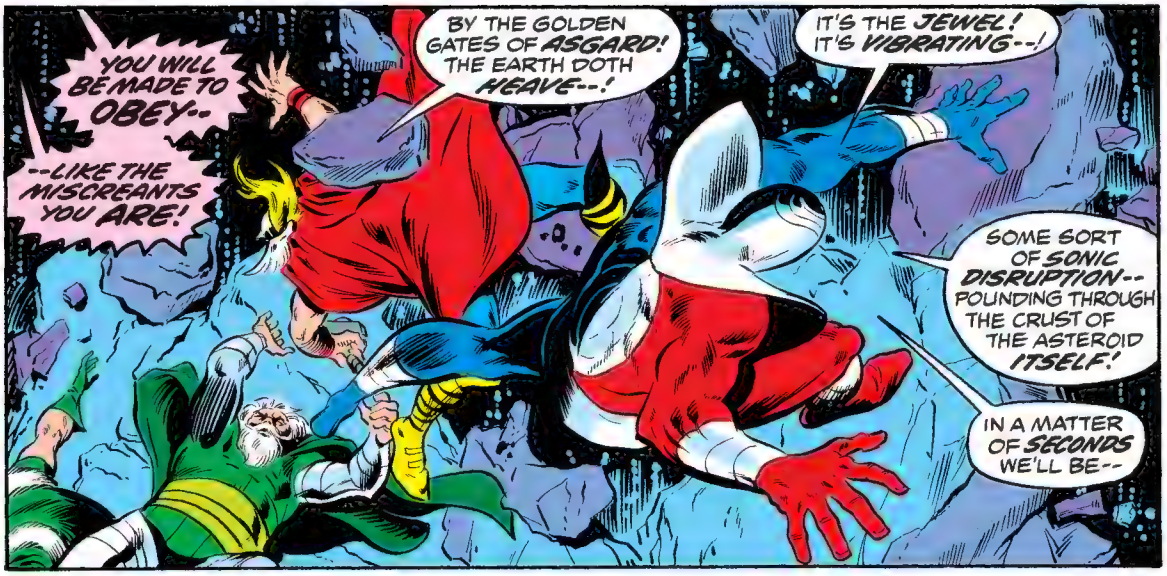
THE GOD-JEWEL HAS MADE ITS WISHES CLEAR. THERE CAN BE NO DEVIATION FROM ITS COMMANDS.

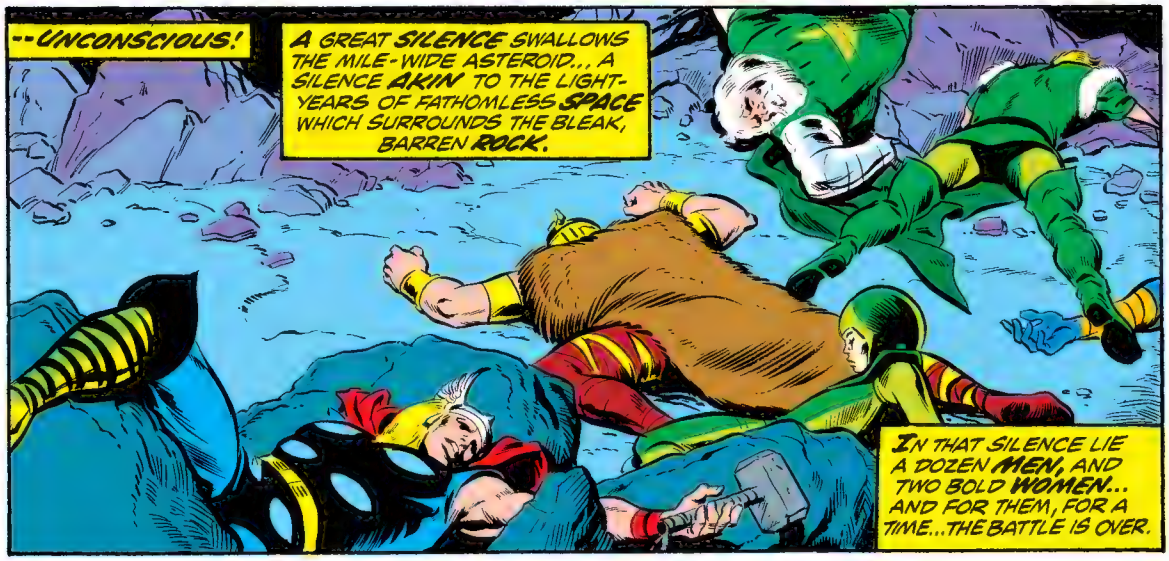
YOU WILL ALL GO BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE ASTEROID-- INTO THE MINES WHICH WERE ONCE OURS, BUT ARE NO LONGER.

AND IF WE REFUSE, PUPPET?

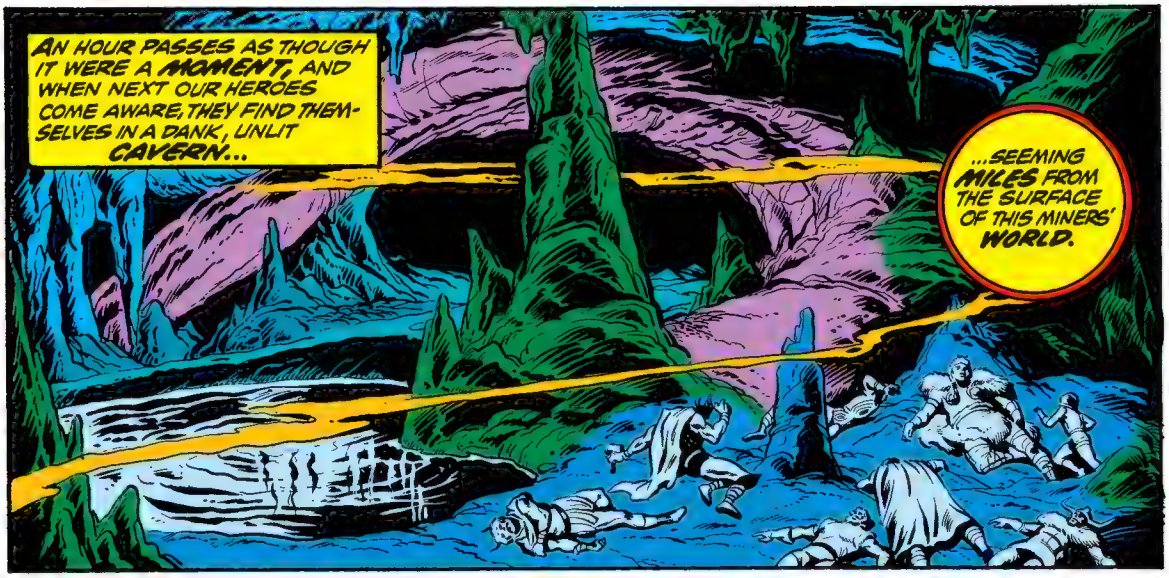
THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL MAN IS NOT A FOOL TO BE ORDERED ABOUT LIKE A CHILD!

IF YOU REFUSE..?

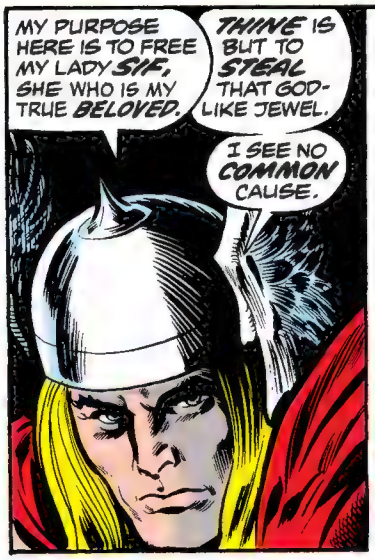

YOU WILL BE MADE TO OBEY--
--LIKE THE MISCREANTS YOU ARE!
BY THE GOLDEN GATES OF ASGARD! THE EARTH DOTH HEAVE--!
IT'S THE JEWEL! IT'S VIBRATING--!
SOME SORT OF SONIC DISRUPTION-- POUNDING THROUGH THE CRUST OF THE ASTEROID ITSELF!
IN A MATTER OF SECONDS WE'LL BE--


--UNCONSCIOUS!
A GREAT SILENCE SWALLOWS THE MILE-WIDE ASTEROID... A SILENCE AKIN TO THE LIGHT-YEARS OF FATHOMLESS SPACE WHICH SURROUNDS THE BLEAK, BARREN ROCK.
IN THAT SILENCE LIE A DOZEN MEN, AND TWO BOLD WOMEN... AND FOR THEM, FOR A TIME...THE BATTLE IS OVER.

WHILE, FOR THE ONLY OTHER LIVING CREATURES ON THIS NEAR-AIRLESS WORLD... THE BATTLE IS ONLY BEGUN.
AND THAT BATTLE IS ALREADY LOST.


AN HOUR PASSES AS THOUGH IT WERE A MOMENT, AND WHEN NEXT OUR HEROES COME AWARE, THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN A DANK, UNLIT CAVERN...
...SEEMING MILES FROM THE SURFACE OF THIS MINERS' WORLD.

IT APPEARS WE LIVE, THUNDER GOD.
AND FOR A TIME... WE SEEM TO BE ALLIES.
THOU DOST FLATTER THYSELF, MERCURIO.

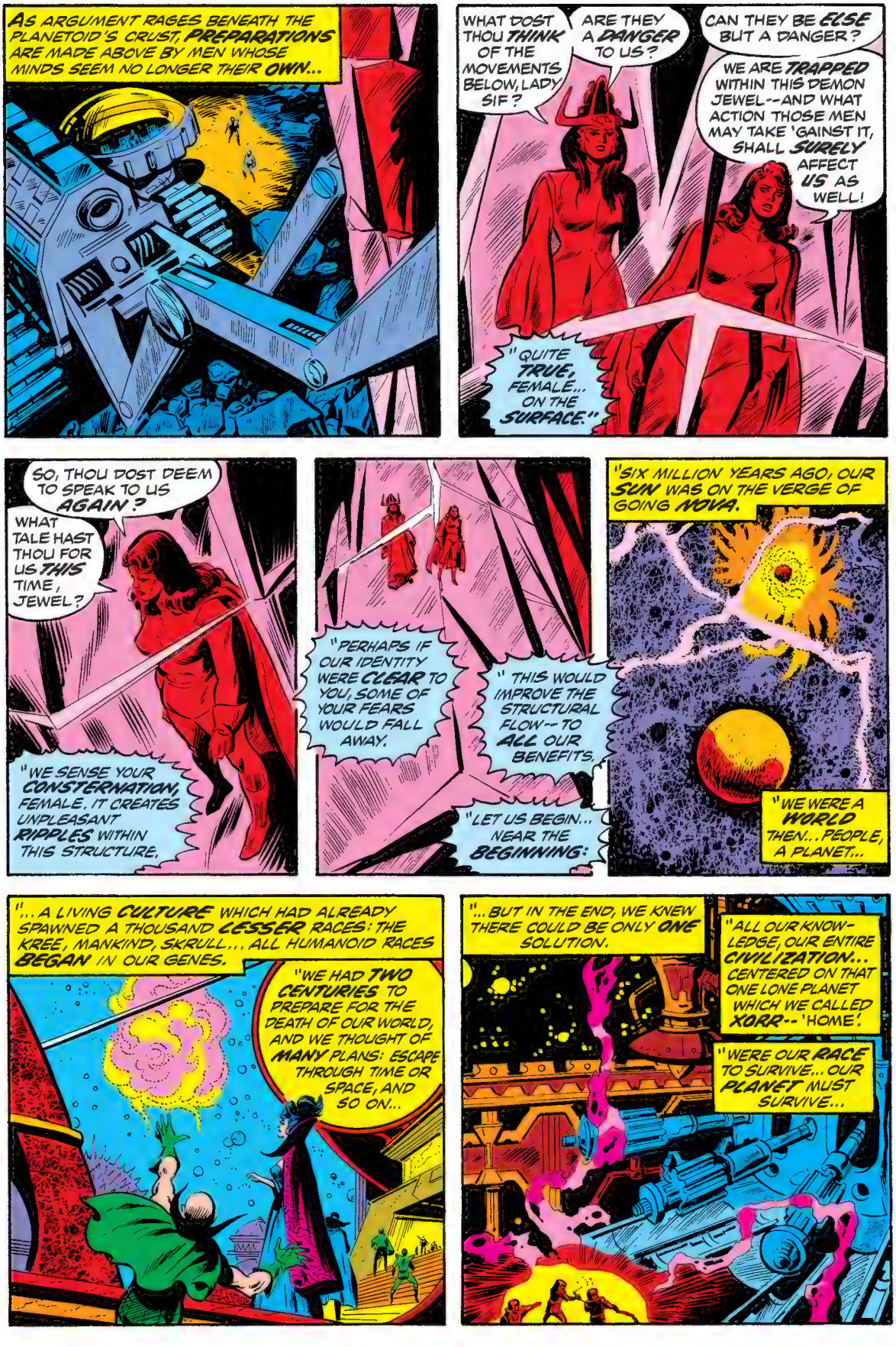

MY PURPOSE HERE IS TO FREE MY LADY SIF, SHE WHO IS MY TRUE BELOVED.
THINE IS BUT TO STEAL THAT GOD-LIKE JEWEL.
I SEE NO COMMON CAUSE.

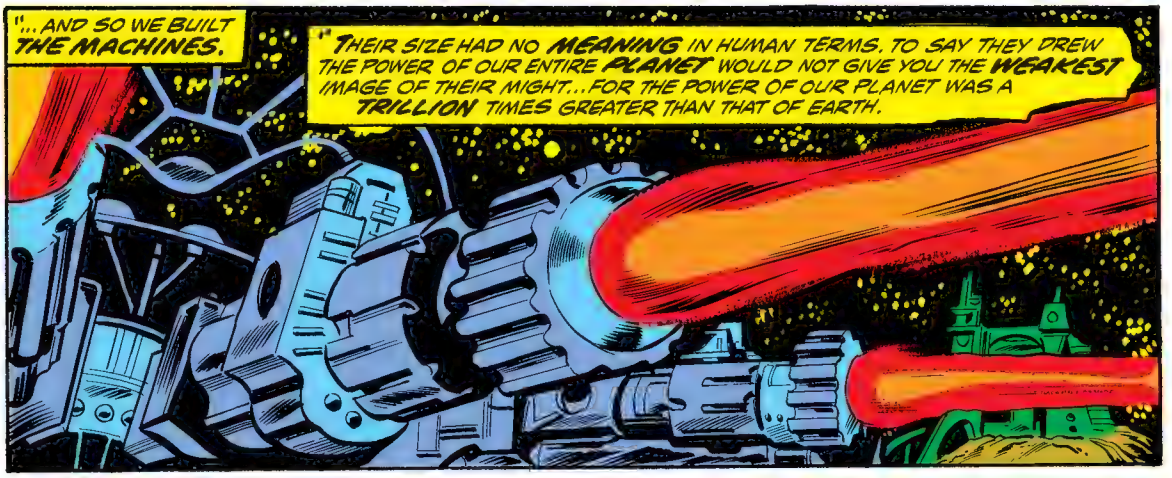
ON THE CONTRARY, MY FRIEND-- OUR CAUSE IS VERY COMMON. YOU WISH TO SAVE YOUR WOMAN...
I WISH TO SAVE MY PLANET.
TOGETHER WE MAY ACCOMPLISH BOTH OUR ENDS.
ALONE... WE MAY ONLY FAIL.

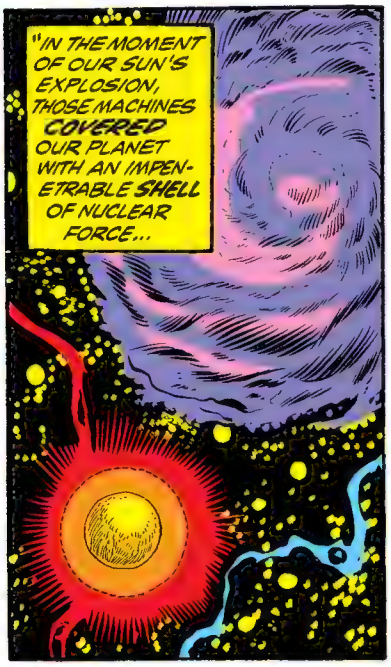
FOR, THIS I SWEAR TO YOU, THOR, LORD OF THUNDER...
THAT CREATURE IS MORE POWERFUL THAN EITHER YOU OR I MAY FULLY KNOW!

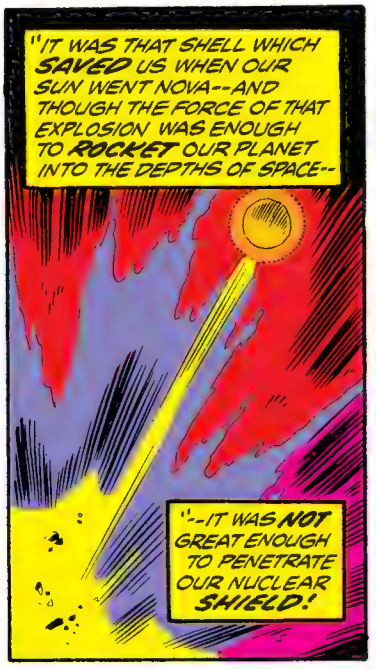
I HAVE HEARD WHISPERS THROUGH ALL THE KNOWN GALAXIES-- AND YES, FROM THE JEWEL-DEMON ITSELF.
ITS POWER MAY EVEN RIVAL YOURS, LORD ODIN-- YOU WHO CALL YOURSELF THE ALL-FATHER--

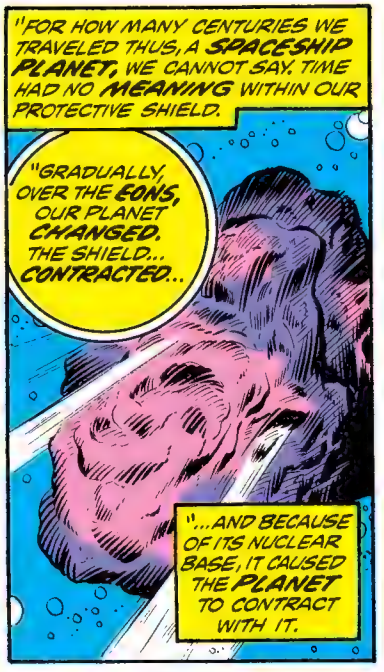
AND MORE, IT MAY SURPASS YOUR GREATEST THRUST!
THEN SHALL WE ALL DIE--
AND AYE, THE UNIVERSE AS WELL!

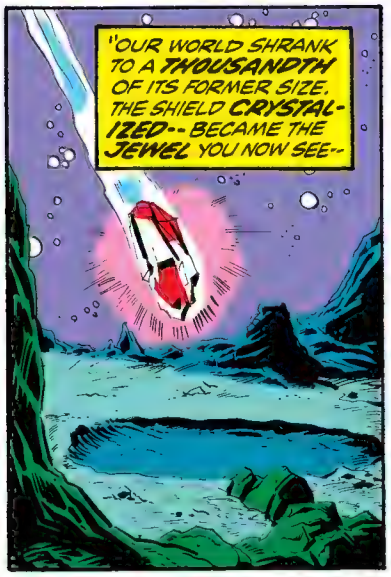

AS ARGUMENT RAGES BENEATH THE PLANETOID'S CRUST, PREPARATIONS ARE MADE ABOVE BY MEN WHOSE MINDS SEEM NO LONGER THEIR OWN...
WHAT DOST THOU THINK OF THE MOVEMENTS BELOW, LADY SIF?
ARE THEY A DANGER TO US?
CAN THEY BE ELSE BUT A DANGER?
WE ARE TRAPPED WITHIN THIS DEMON JEWEL--AND WHAT ACTION THOSE MEN MAY TAKE 'GAINST IT, SHALL SURELY AFFECT US AS WELL!
"QUITE TRUE, FEMALE... ON THE SURFACE."
SO, THOU DOST DEEM TO SPEAK TO US AGAIN?
WHAT TALE HAST THOU FOR US THIS TIME, JEWEL?
"WE SENSE YOUR CONSTERNATION, FEMALE. IT CREATES UNPLEASANT RIPPLES WITHIN THIS STRUCTURE.
"PERHAPS IF OUR IDENTITY WERE CLEAR TO YOU, SOME OF YOUR FEARS WOULD FALL AWAY.
"THIS WOULD IMPROVE THE STRUCTURAL FLOW--TO ALL OUR BENEFITS.
"LET US BEGIN... NEAR THE BEGINNING:
"SIX MILLION YEARS AGO, OUR SUN WAS ON THE VERGE OF GOING NOVA.
"WE WERE A WORLD THEN.. PEOPLE, A PLANET...
"... A LIVING CULTURE WHICH HAD ALREADY SPAWNED A THOUSAND LESSER RACES: THE KREE, MANKIND, SKRULL... ALL HUMANOID RACES BEGAN IN OUR GENES.
"WE HAD TWO CENTURIES TO PREPARE FOR THE DEATH OF OUR WORLD, AND WE THOUGHT OF MANY PLANS: ESCAPE THROUGH TIME OR SPACE, AND SO ON...
"... BUT IN THE END, WE KNEW THERE COULD BE ONLY ONE SOLUTION.
"ALL OUR KNOWLEDGE, OUR ENTIRE CIVILIZATION... CENTERED ON THAT ONE LONE PLANET WHICH WE CALLED XORR--'HOME!'
"WERE OUR RACE TO SURVIVE... OUR PLANET MUST SURVIVE...


"...AND SO WE BUILT THE MACHINES.
"THEIR SIZE HAD NO MEANING IN HUMAN TERMS. TO SAY THEY DREW THE POWER OF OUR ENTIRE PLANET WOULD NOT GIVE YOU THE WEAKEST IMAGE OF THEIR MIGHT...FOR THE POWER OF OUR PLANET WAS A TRILLION TIMES GREATER THAN THAT OF EARTH.


"IN THE MOMENT OF OUR SUN'S EXPLOSION, THOSE MACHINES COVERED OUR PLANET WITH AN IMPENETRABLE SHELL OF NUCLEAR FORCE...

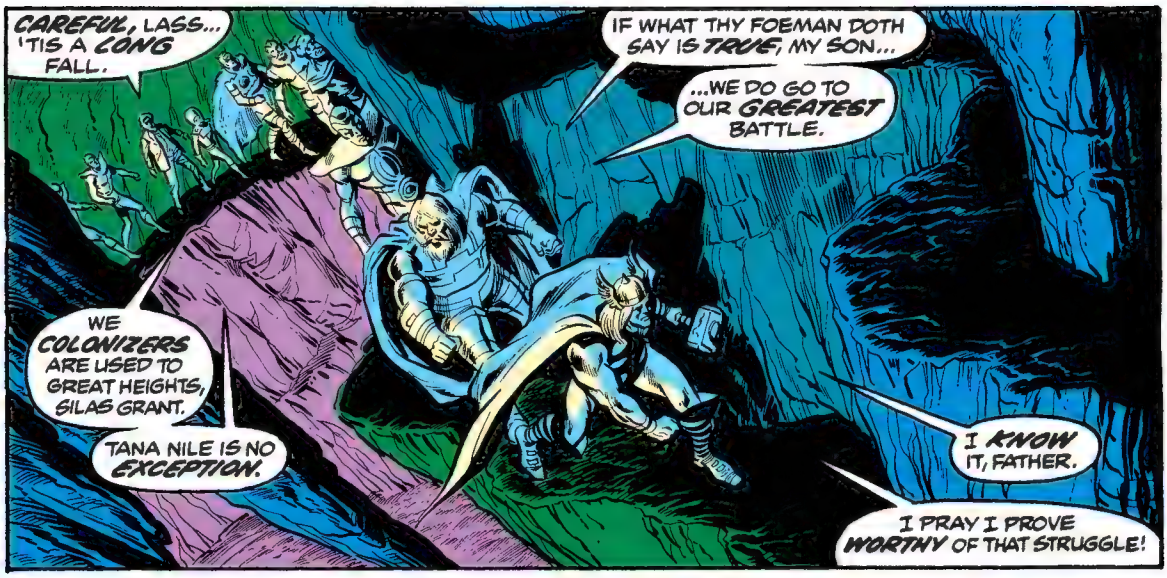

"IT WAS THAT SHELL WHICH SAVED US WHEN OUR SUN WENT NOVA--AND THOUGH THE FORCE OF THAT EXPLOSION WAS ENOUGH TO ROCKET OUR PLANET INTO THE DEPTHS OF SPACE--
"--IT WAS NOT GREAT ENOUGH TO PENETRATE OUR NUCLEAR SHIELD!

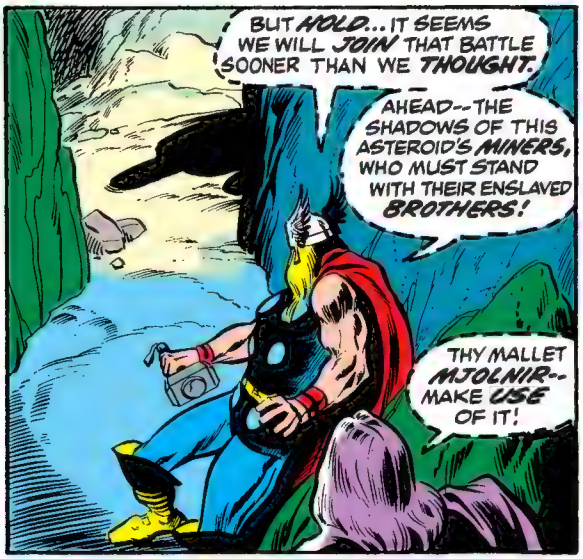

"FOR HOW MANY CENTURIES WE TRAVELED THUS, A SPACESHIP PLANET, WE CANNOT SAY. TIME HAD NO MEANING WITHIN OUR PROTECTIVE SHIELD.
"GRADUALLY, OVER THE EONS, OUR PLANET CHANGED. THE SHIELD... CONTRACTED...
"...AND BECAUSE OF ITS NUCLEAR BASE, IT CAUSED THE PLANET TO CONTRACT WITH IT.


"OUR WORLD SHRANK TO A THOUSANDTH OF ITS FORMER SIZE. THE SHIELD CRYSTALIZED--BECAME THE JEWEL YOU NOW SEE--

"--AND ONE MILLION YEARS AGO, THE JEWEL SMASHED INTO THIS BARREN ASTEROID, HERE, IN THE DARK NEBULA--
"--AND HAS LAIN AT REST EVER SINCE."
BOOM!

THEN... 'TIS TRUE, THIS JEWEL DOTH LIVE?
"SINCE BEFORE THY CONCEPTION.
"AND NOW... WITH YOUR LIFE-ENERGY...WE MAY RETURN TO TAKE OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE...
"...AS GODS!"


CAREFUL, LASS... 'TIS A LONG FALL.
IF WHAT THY FOEMAN DOTH SAY IS TRUE, MY SON...
...WE DO GO TO OUR GREATEST BATTLE.
WE COLONIZERS ARE USED TO GREAT HEIGHTS, SILAS GRANT.
TANA NILE IS NO EXCEPTION.
I KNOW IT, FATHER.
I PRAY I PROVE WORTHY OF THAT STRUGGLE!


BUT HOLD... IT SEEMS WE WILL JOIN THAT BATTLE SOONER THAN WE THOUGHT.
AHEAD--THE SHADOWS OF THIS ASTEROID'S MINERS, WHO MUST STAND WITH THEIR ENSLAVED BROTHERS!
THY MALLET MJOLNIR--MAKE USE OF IT!

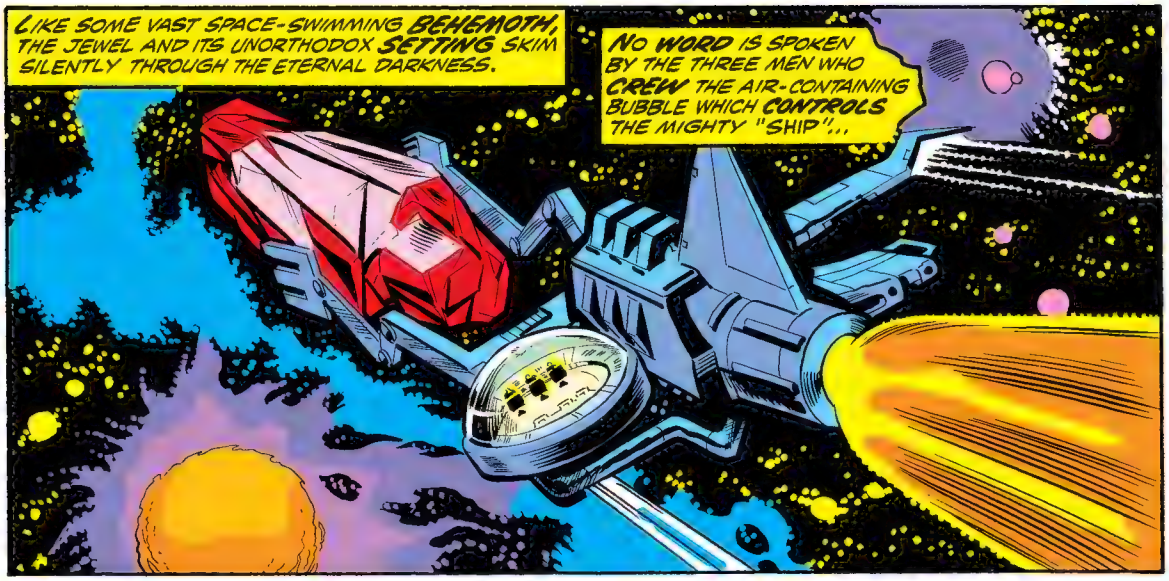
ODIN COMMANDS.
HIS SON OBEYS!

SPRAK!

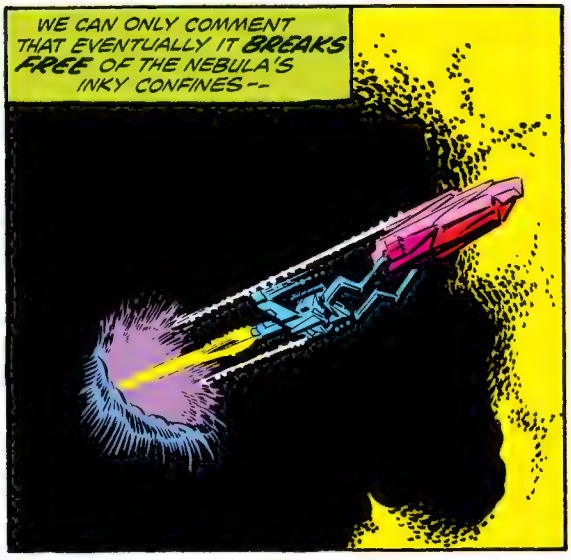
BY THE EYES OF DIS!
WHAT FANCY IS THIS?

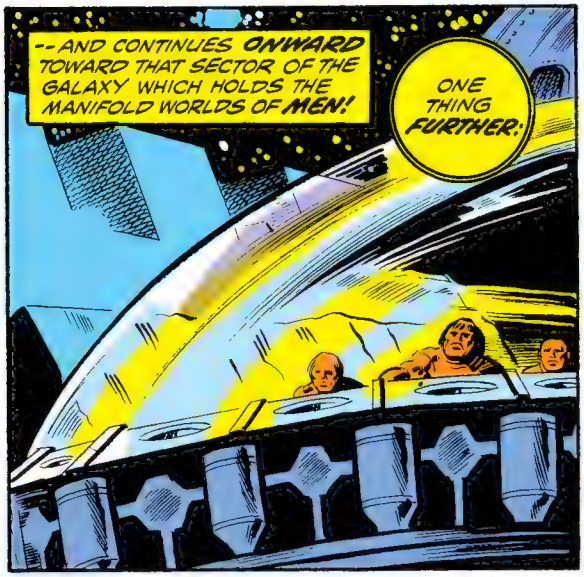
WOK!

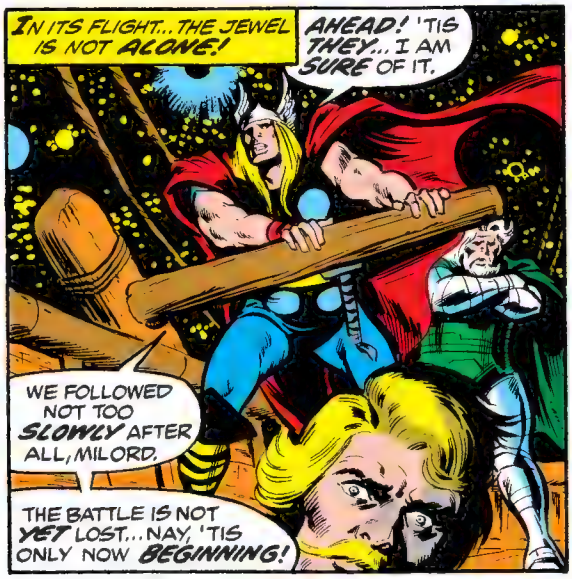
THE INTRUDERS WE WERE ORDERED TO GUARD! THEY'VE ESCAPED, YOU FOOLS!
OUR FELLOW, KAGK, WILL NOT BE PLEASED WITH OUR FAILURE!
DESTROY THEM! NOW!
YOU'VE DONE QUITE ENOUGH, THUNDER GOD!
IT'S TIME MERCURIO DID WORK FOR THIS TEAMING--
--BY USING HIS POWER OF ICE!
SMASH!
SURTUR'S FLAME! HAST THOU BETRAYED US?
THE PLANETOID DOTH SHAKE--
--TREMBLING WITH THY VIBRATIONS!
NOT SO, LORD ODIN--THIS ISN'T MERCURIO'S DOING!
THE VIBRATIONS ORIGINATE ABOVE. SOME GREAT WEIGHT-- LIFTING FROM THE SURFACE OF THE ASTEROID!
THE JEWEL! DON'T YOU SEE?
IT HAS TO BE THE JEWEL!

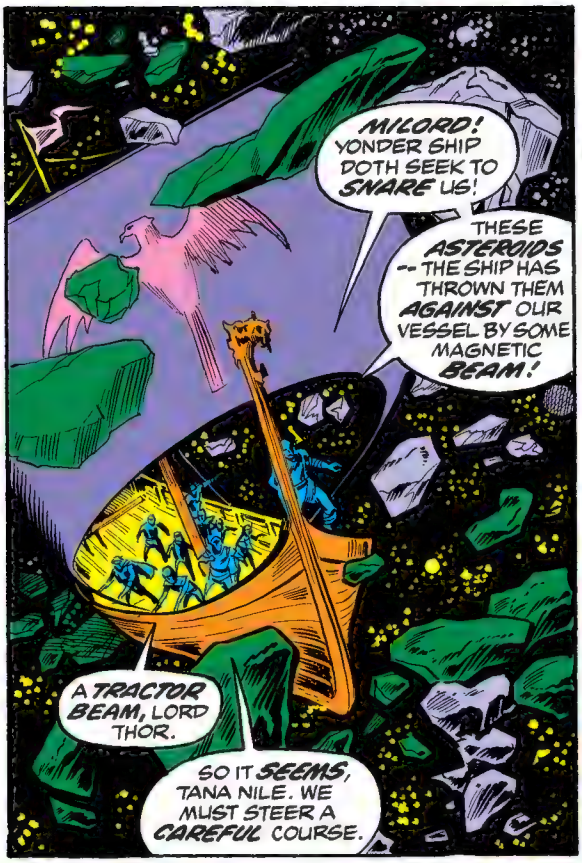

LIKE SOME VAST SPACE-SWIMMING BEHEMOTH, THE JEWEL AND ITS UNORTHODOX SETTING SKIM SILENTLY THROUGH THE ETERNAL DARKNESS.
NO WORD IS SPOKEN BY THE THREE MEN WHO CREW THE AIR-CONTAINING BUBBLE WHICH CONTROLS THE MIGHTY "SHIP"...

...NOR DO THE JEWEL'S CAPTIVES SPEAK, OVERCOME AS THEY ARE BY THE PRESSURE OF THE FORCES WORKING AROUND THEM.
HOW MANY MINUTES PASS AS THE JEWEL COVERS THE BREADTH OF THE DARK NEBULA, WE CANNOT SAY--


WE CAN ONLY COMMENT THAT EVENTUALLY IT BREAKS FREE OF THE NEBULA'S INKY CONFINES--


--AND CONTINUES ONWARD TOWARD THAT SECTOR OF THE GALAXY WHICH HOLDS THE MANIFOLD WORLDS OF MEN!
ONE THING FURTHER:

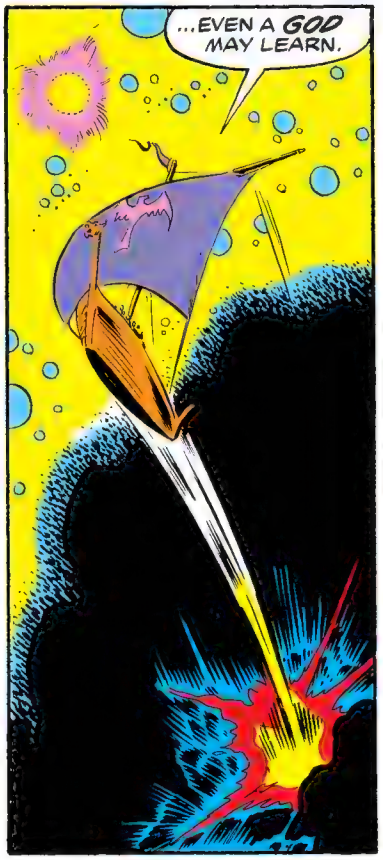

IN ITS FLIGHT... THE JEWEL IS NOT ALONE!
AHEAD! 'TIS THEY... I AM SURE OF IT.
WE FOLLOWED NOT TOO SLOWLY AFTER ALL, MILORD.
THE BATTLE IS NOT YET LOST... NAY, 'TIS ONLY NOW BEGINNING!


MILORD! YONDER SHIP DOTH SEEK TO SNARE US!
THESE ASTEROIDS -- THE SHIP HAS THROWN THEM AGAINST OUR VESSEL BY SOME MAGNETIC BEAM!
A TRACTOR BEAM, LORD THOR.
SO IT SEEMS, TANA NILE. WE MUST STEER A CAREFUL COURSE.

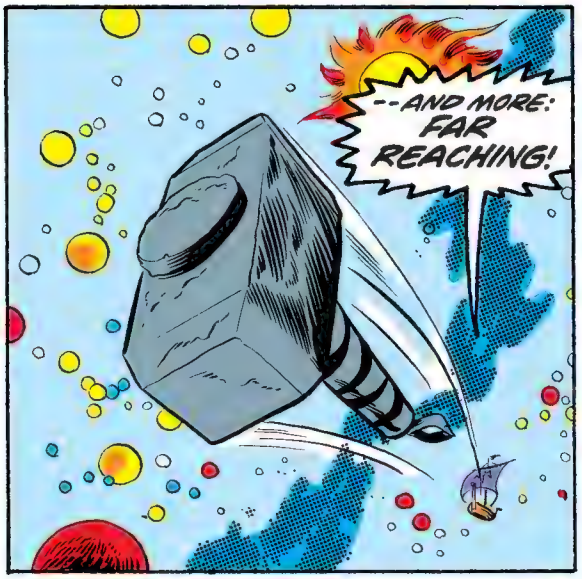
BUT HOW, THUNDER GOD? THIS SPACE-DEBRIS SURROUNDS US!
IF ONE MAN-SIZED BOULDER SHOULD STRIKE THIS FLIMSY STAR-JAMMER... WE'RE DOOMED!
SILENCE, MORTAL. 'TIS MY SON WHO GUIDES THIS BOAT.
IF ANY CAN WIN US FREE... 'TIS THOR!

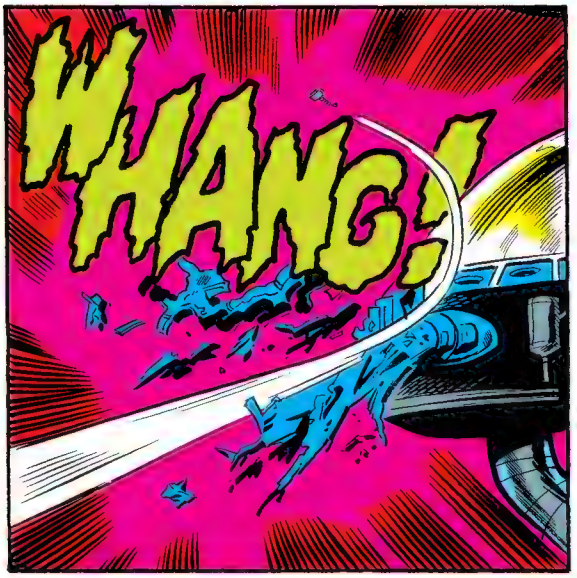
FATHER, WOULD THAT THOU DIDST HAVE SUCH CONFIDENCE IN ME WHEN LAST WE ARGUED.*
MAYHAP MANY HARD WORDS HAVE REMAINED UNSPOKEN--
--AND WE MIGHT FACE THIS PERIL WITH FEWER GRIM MEMORIES BEHIND US!
*THOR #205.--RT.

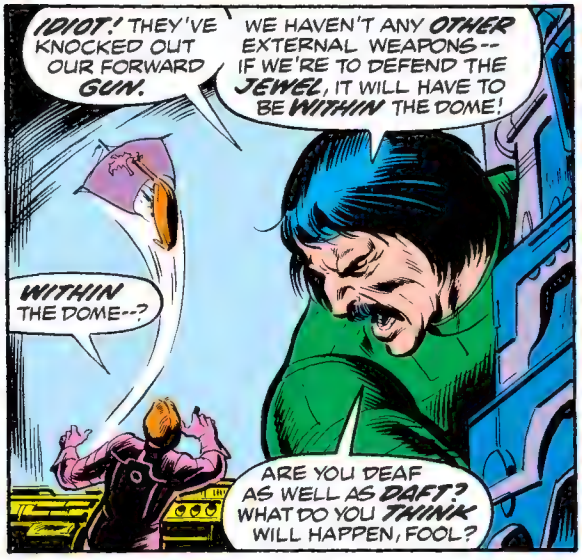
'TIS THE WAY OF THE UNIVERSE, MY SON.
BY SUCH SEEMING ERRORS DO WE LEARN... AND DO NOT BE DECEIVED, LORD THOR...


...EVEN A GOD MAY LEARN.

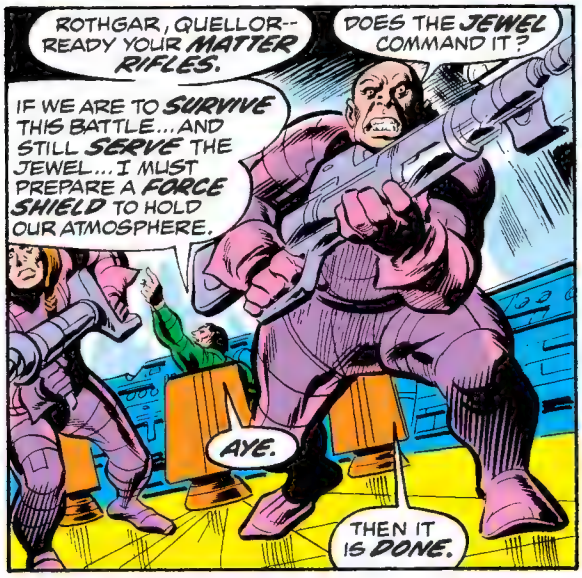
MY LORDS... TO THE NORTH ALONG THE GALACTIC PLANE!
ALREADY THE JEWEL HAS BECOME BUT ANOTHER STAR!
VERILY, WE MUST HURRY TO LIE UP BESIDE HER!
THE ASGARDIAN SPACE-SKIMMER IS OVERTAKING US, KAGK.
THEY SEEM MORE SKILLED THAN WE THOUGHT.
WHATEVER THEIR SKILLS, ROTHGAR-- OUR WEAPONS ARE MORE ADVANCED.
USE THEM!
SKREEEEE*
* C'MON, WE KNOW THERE'S NO SOUND IN SPACE. PUT IT DOWN TO POETIC LICENCE. OKAY? -- GERRY & JOHN.
GHOOM!
ANTI-MOLECULAR RAYS!
THEIR SCIENCE IS STRONG, THOR!
CRUMP!
YEA, THAT IT IS! THEY USE WEAPONS NOT SEEN IN THE REALM ETERNAL FOR THESE MANY EONS!
YET, AS POWERFUL AS THEIR WEAPONS BE -- THE HAMMER OF THOR IS STRONGER--


--AND MORE: FAR REACHING!

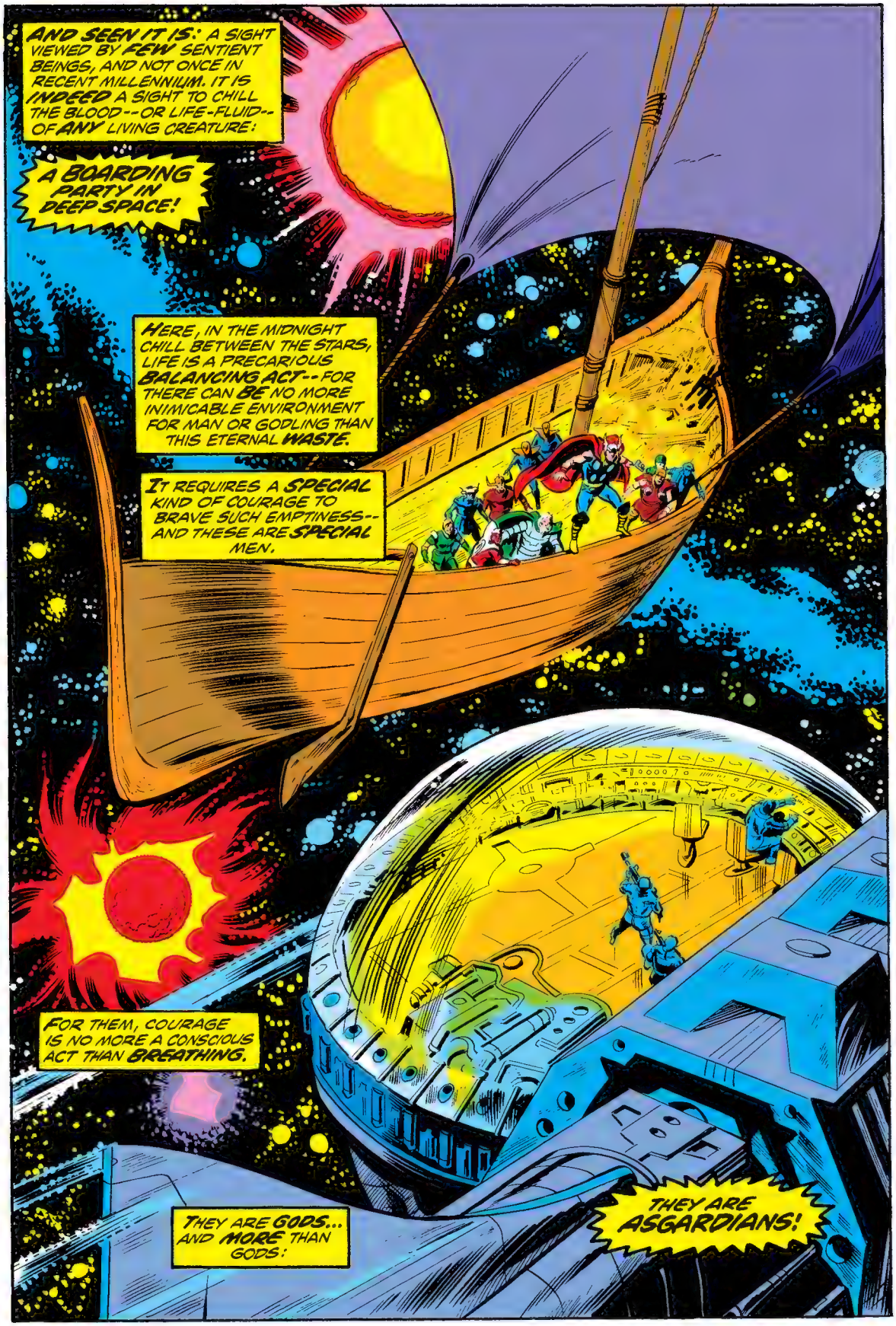

WHANG!

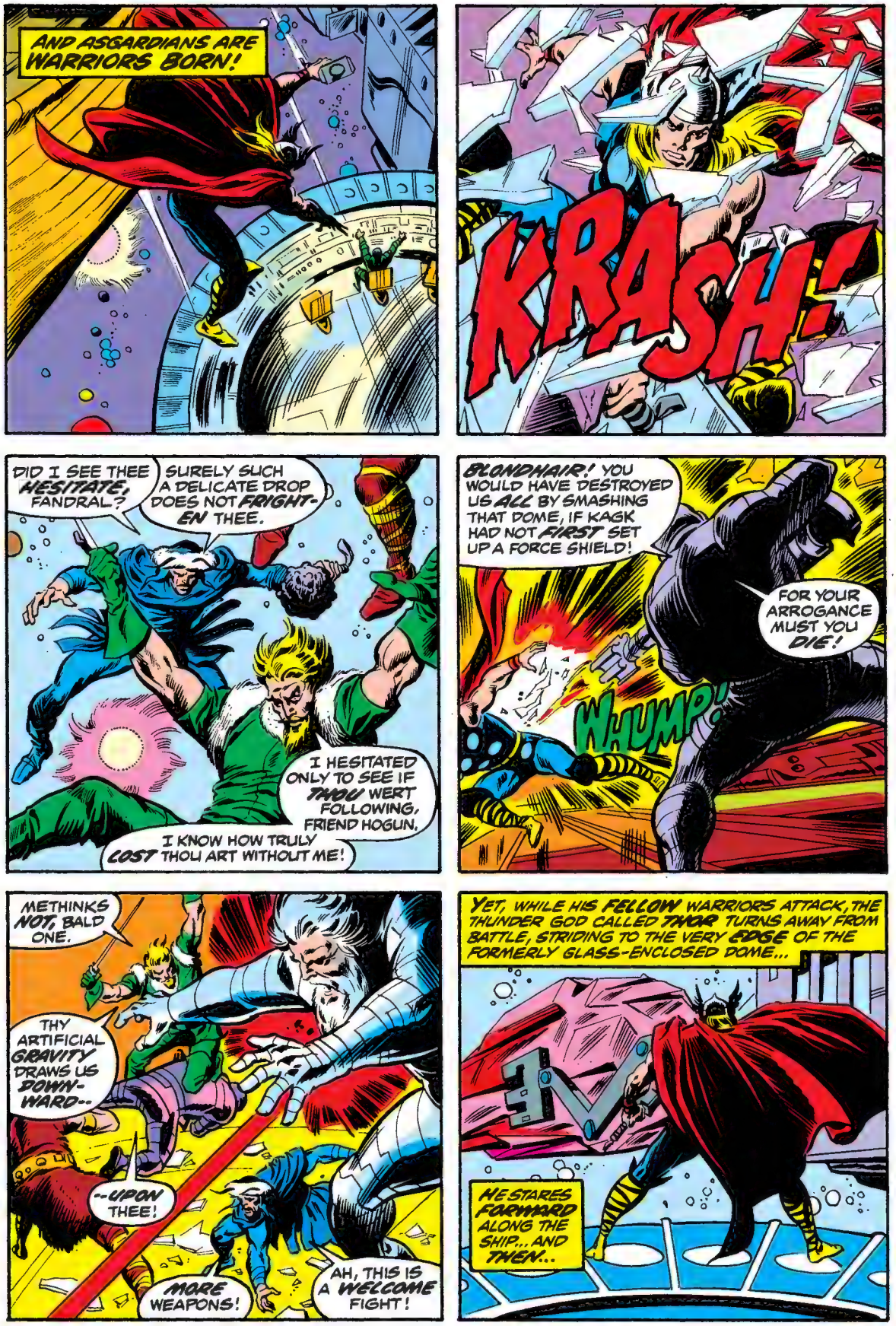

IDIOT! THEY'VE KNOCKED OUT OUR FORWARD GUN.
WE HAVEN'T ANY OTHER EXTERNAL WEAPONS-- IF WE'RE TO DEFEND THE JEWEL, IT WILL HAVE TO BE WITHIN THE DOME!
WITHIN THE DOME--?
ARE YOU DEAF AS WELL AS DAFT? WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN, FOOL?

THE ASGARDIANS WILL WANT TO FREE THEIR WOMEN--
AND TO DO THAT, THEY MUST DESTROY US. THEY HAVE NO CHOICE.
ONLY ONE COURSE IS OPEN TO THEM--AND TO US.

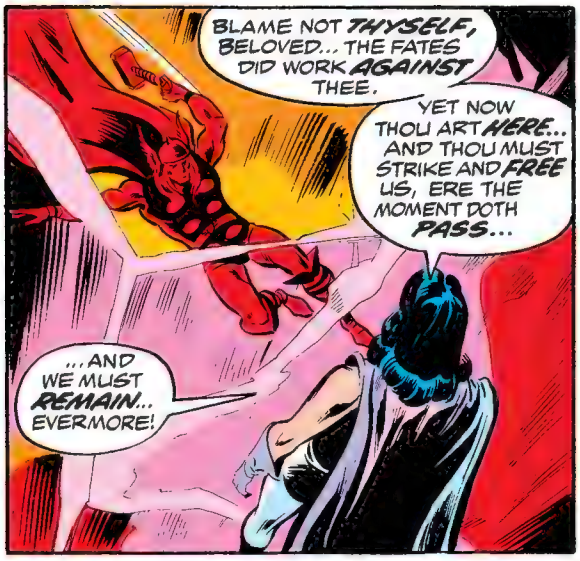

ROTHGAR, QUELLOR-- READY YOUR MATTER RIFLES.
DOES THE JEWEL COMMAND IT?
IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE THIS BATTLE... AND STILL SERVE THE JEWEL... I MUST PREPARE A FORCE SHIELD TO HOLD OUR ATMOSPHERE.
AYE.
THEN IT IS DONE.

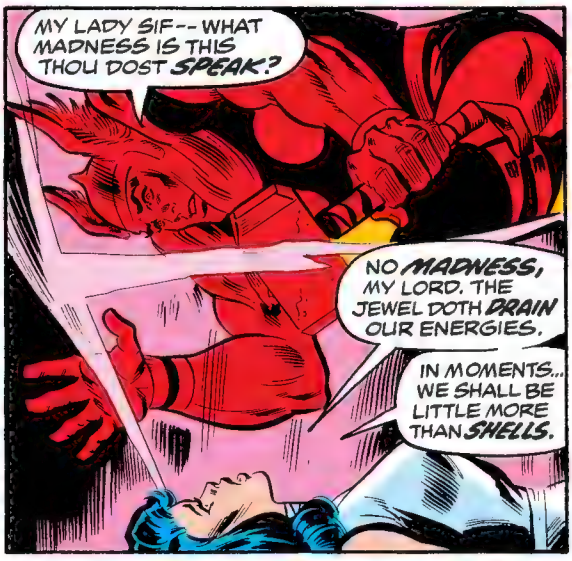
KARNILLA, DOST THOU SEE?
ABOVE US--THE STARJAMMER! AND ON THE DECK--
ASGARDIAN WARRIORS! MILADY, WE ARE SAVED!
"PERHAPS, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN."

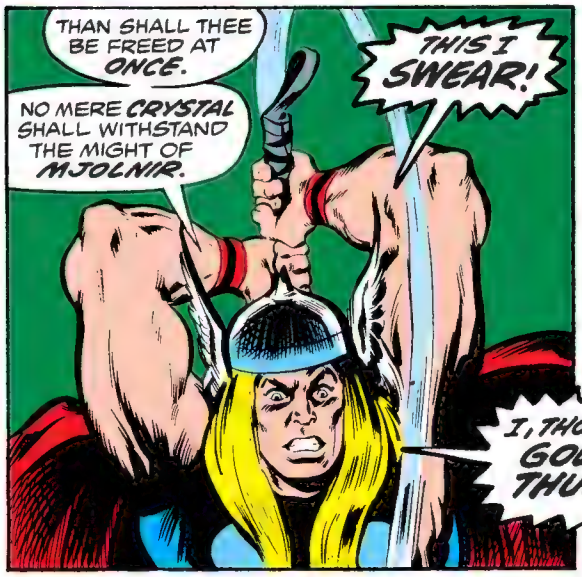

AND SEEN IT IS: A SIGHT VIEWED BY FEW SENTIENT BEINGS, AND NOT ONCE IN RECENT MILLENNIUM. IT IS INDEED A SIGHT TO CHILL THE BLOOD--OR LIFE-FLUID--OF ANY LIVING CREATURE!
A BOARDING PARTY IN DEEP SPACE!
HERE, IN THE MIDNIGHT CHILL BETWEEN THE STARS, LIFE IS A PRECARIOUS BALANCING ACT--FOR THERE CAN BE NO MORE INIMICABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR MAN OR GODLING THAN THIS ETERNAL WASTE.
IT REQUIRES A SPECIAL KIND OF COURAGE TO BRAVE SUCH EMPTINESS--AND THESE ARE SPECIAL MEN.
FOR THEM, COURAGE IS NO MORE A CONSCIOUS ACT THAN BREATHING.
THEY ARE GODS... AND MORE THAN GODS:
THEY ARE ASGARDIANS!

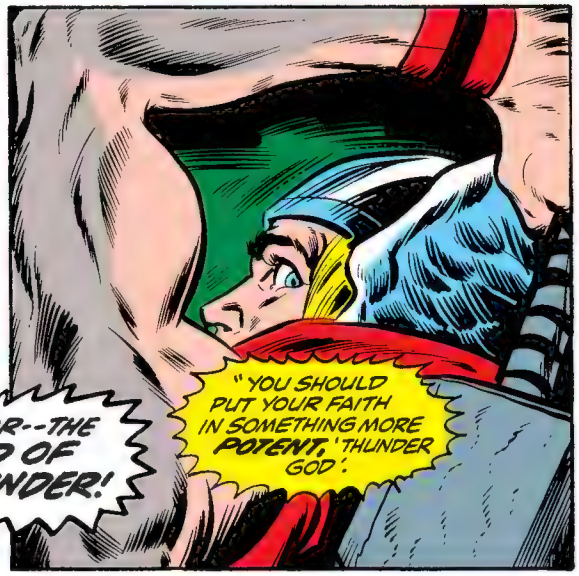

AND ASGARDIANS ARE WARRIORS BORN!
KRASH!
DID I SEE THEE HESITATE, FANDRAL?
SURELY SUCH A DELICATE DROP DOES NOT FRIGHTEN THEE.
I HESITATED ONLY TO SEE IF THOU WERT FOLLOWING, FRIEND HOGUN.
I KNOW HOW TRULY LOST THOU ART WITHOUT ME!
BLONDHAIR! YOU WOULD HAVE DESTROYED US ALL BY SMASHING THAT DOME, IF KAGK HAD NOT FIRST SET UP A FORCE SHIELD!
FOR YOUR ARROGANCE MUST YOU DIE!
WHUMP!
METHINKS NOT, BALD ONE.
THY ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY DRAWS US DOWNWARD--
--UPON THEE!
MORE WEAPONS!
AH, THIS IS A WELCOME FIGHT!
YET, WHILE HIS FELLOW WARRIORS ATTACK, THE THUNDER GOD CALLED THOR TURNS AWAY FROM BATTLE, STRIDING TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE FORMERLY GLASS-ENCLOSED DOME...
HE STARES FORWARD ALONG THE SHIP... AND THEN...

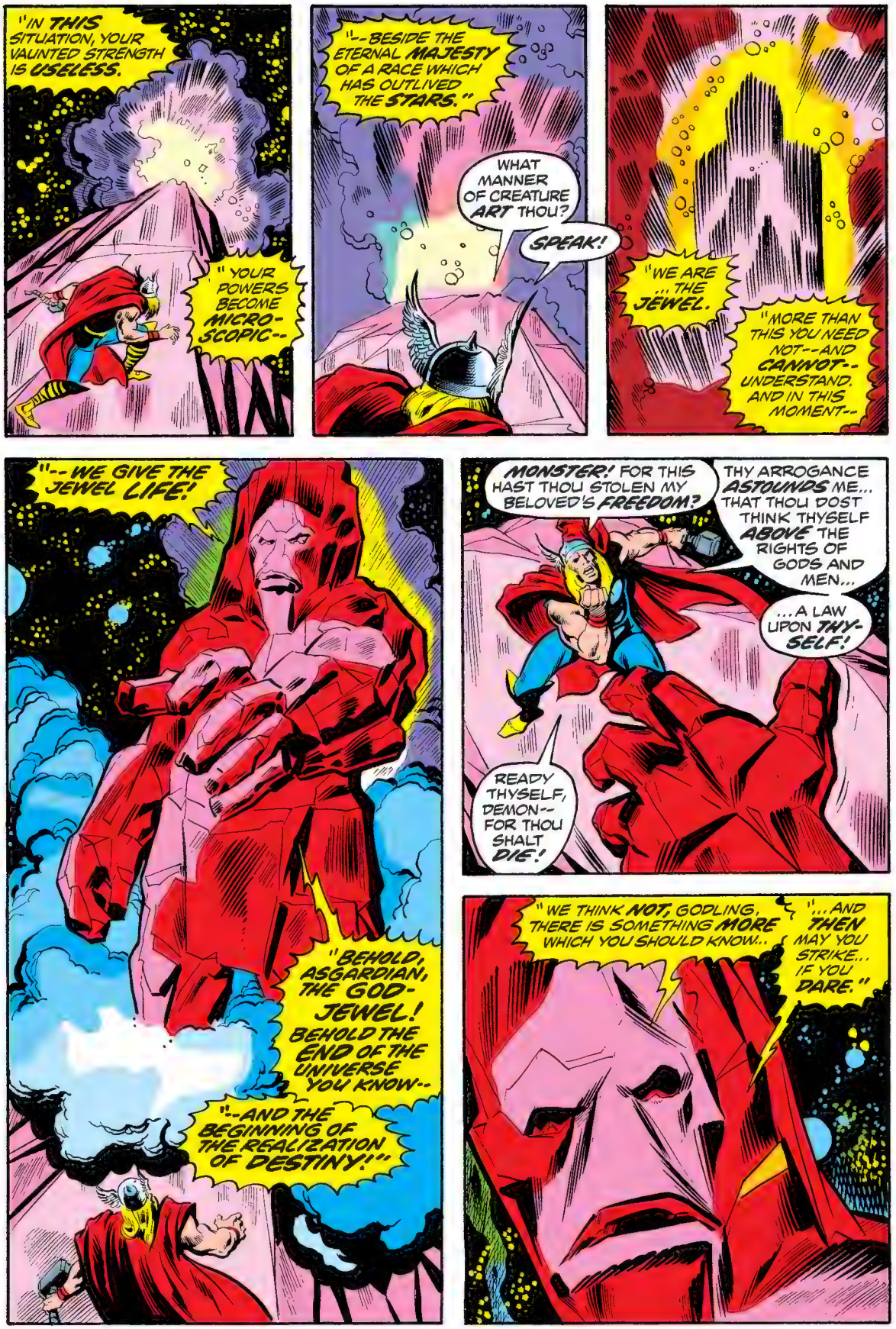
HE LEAPS!
MILADY, FORGIVE ME FOR NOT COMING MORE QUICKLY.
I HAVE NO EXCUSE BUT MY OWN SLOTH.

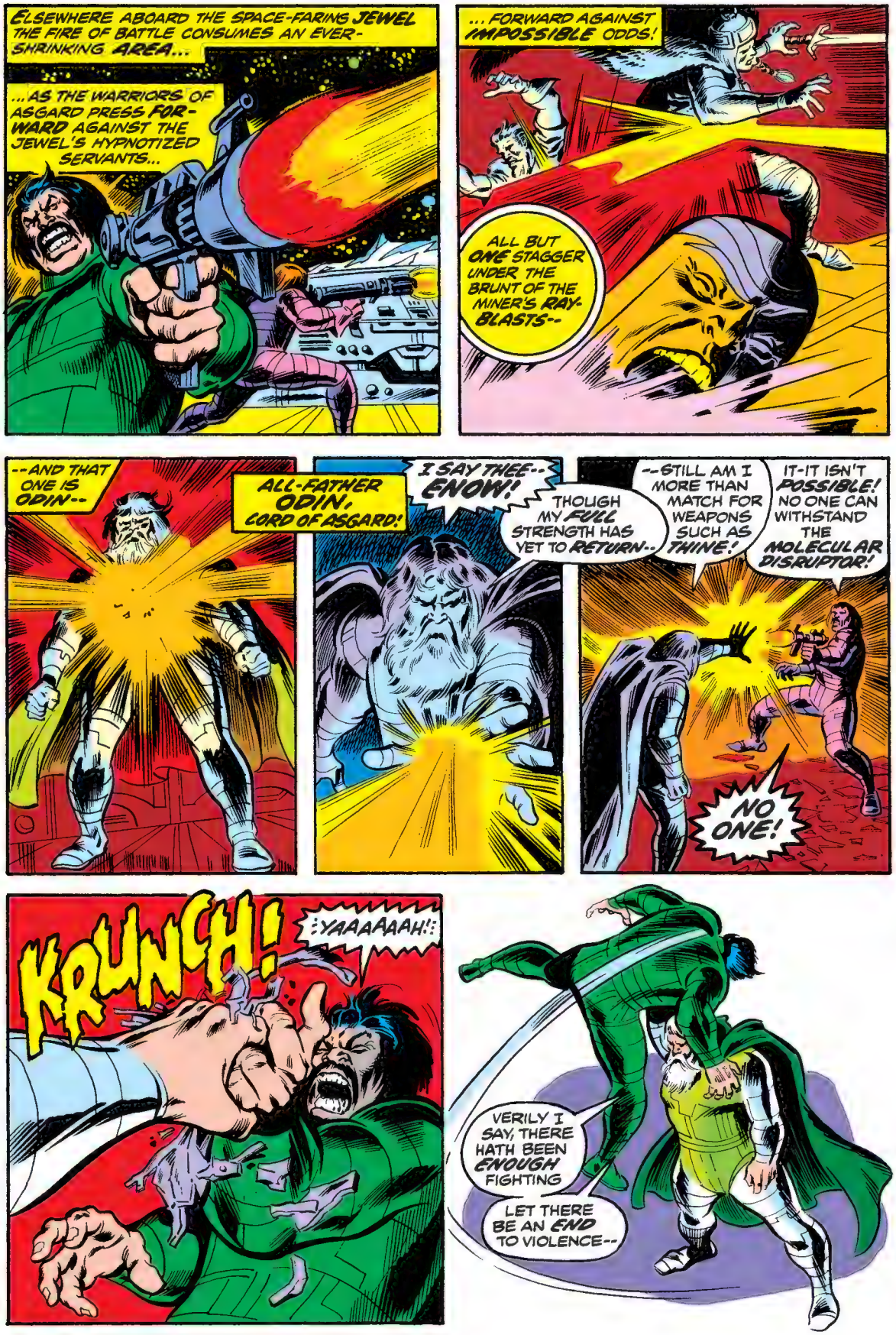

BLAME NOT THYSELF, BELOVED... THE FATES DID WORK AGAINST THEE.
YET NOW THOU ART HERE... AND THOU MUST STRIKE AND FREE US, ERE THE MOMENT DOTH PASS...
...AND WE MUST REMAIN... EVERMORE!

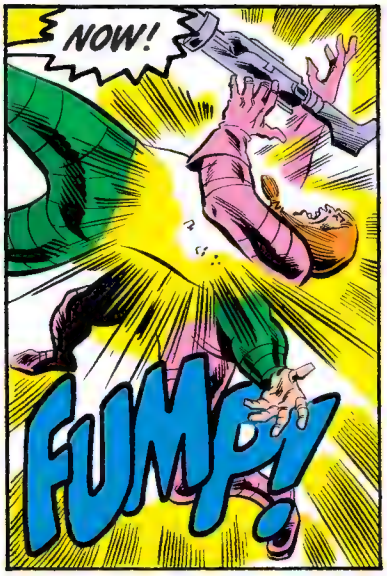

MY LADY SIF--WHAT MADNESS IS THIS THOU DOST SPEAK?
NO MADNESS, MY LORD. THE JEWEL DOTH DRAIN OUR ENERGIES.
IN MOMENTS... WE SHALL BE LITTLE MORE THAN SHELLS.

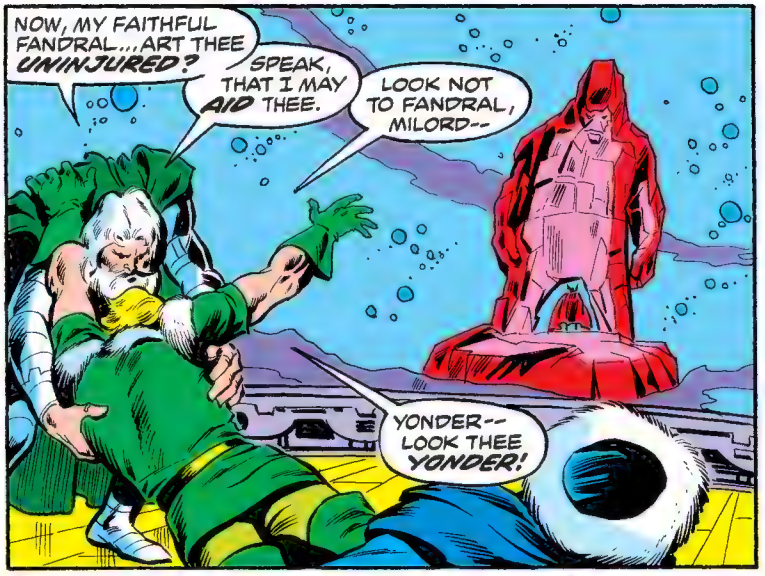

THAN SHALL THEE BE FREED AT ONCE.
NO MERE CRYSTAL SHALL WITHSTAND THE MIGHT OF MJOLNIR.
THIS I SWEAR!
I, THOR--THE GOD OF THUNDER!

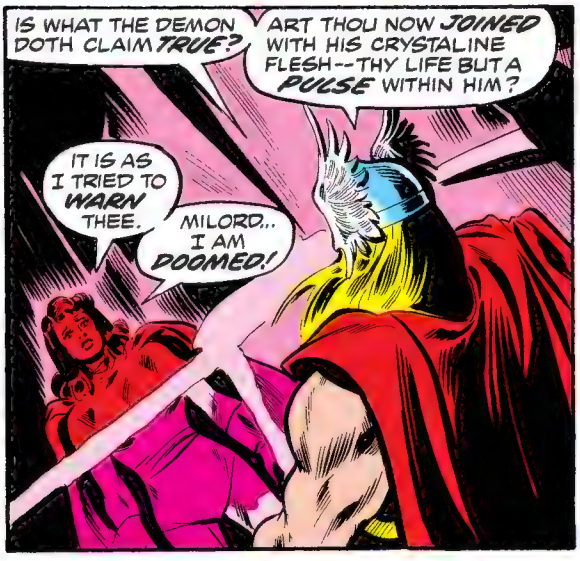

"YOU SHOULD PUT YOUR FAITH IN SOMETHING MORE POTENT, 'THUNDER GOD'.

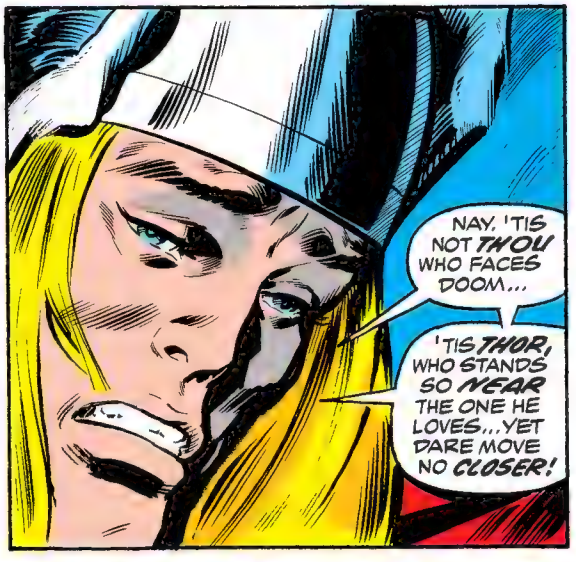

"IN THIS SITUATION, YOUR VAUNTED STRENGTH IS USELESS.
" YOUR POWERS BECOME MICRO-SCOPIC--
"--BESIDE THE ETERNAL MAJESTY OF A RACE WHICH HAS OUTLIVED THE STARS."
WHAT MANNER OF CREATURE ART THOU?
SPEAK!
"WE ARE ... THE JEWEL.
"MORE THAN THIS YOU NEED NOT--AND CANNOT--UNDERSTAND. AND IN THIS MOMENT--
"--WE GIVE THE JEWEL LIFE!
"BEHOLD, ASGARDIAN, THE GOD-JEWEL! BEHOLD THE END OF THE UNIVERSE YOU KNOW--
"--AND THE BEGINNING OF THE REALIZATION OF DESTINY!"
MONSTER! FOR THIS HAST THOU STOLEN MY BELOVED'S FREEDOM?
THY ARROGANCE ASTOUNDS ME... THAT THOU DOST THINK THYSELF ABOVE THE RIGHTS OF GODS AND MEN...
...A LAW UPON THY-SELF!
READY THYSELF, DEMON--FOR THOU SHALT DIE!
"WE THINK NOT, GODLING, THERE IS SOMETHING MORE WHICH YOU SHOULD KNOW...
"...AND THEN MAY YOU STRIKE... IF YOU DARE."


ELSEWHERE ABOARD THE SPACE-FARING JEWEL THE FIRE OF BATTLE CONSUMES AN EVER-SHRINKING AREA...
...AS THE WARRIORS OF ASGARD PRESS FORWARD AGAINST THE JEWEL'S HYPNOTIZED SERVANTS...
...FORWARD AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS!
ALL BUT ONE STAGGER UNDER THE BRUNT OF THE MINER'S RAY-BLASTS--
--AND THAT ONE IS ODIN--
ALL-FATHER ODIN, LORD OF ASGARD!
I SAY THEE-- ENOW!
THOUGH MY FULL STRENGTH HAS YET TO RETURN--
--STILL AM I MORE THAN MATCH FOR WEAPONS SUCH AS THINE!
IT-IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! NO ONE CAN WITHSTAND THE MOLECULAR DISRUPTOR!
NO ONE!
KRUNCH!
:YAAAAAAH!:
VERILY I SAY, THERE HATH BEEN ENOUGH FIGHTING
LET THERE BE AN END TO VIOLENCE--






IS WHAT THE DEMON DOTH CLAIM TRUE?
ART THOU NOW JOINED WITH HIS CRYSTALINE FLESH--THY LIFE BUT A PULSE WITHIN HIM?
IT IS AS I TRIED TO WARN THEE.
MILORD.. I AM DOOMED!



MY SON...WHAT DOST THOU MEAN BY THIS?
EXPLAIN THY WORDS, GIVE REASON FOR THIS STATEMENT OF DEFEAT!
ISN'T THE REASON CLEAR, ODIN?
YOUR SON IS A COWARDLY DOG!

IF ONLY 'TWERE SO, 'TWOULD BE A FAILURE I MIGHT OVERCOME.
NAY... I AM HELPLESS TO ACT, AS ARE WE ALL. FOR, IF ONE ATOM OF THIS COSMIC JEWEL BE VIOLENTLY DESTROYED--

NEXT ISSUE: WHERE RULES CHAOS!

THOR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
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THE MIGHTY
THOR
THE LIVING GOD-JEWEL MUST BE MINE-- MINE!
I SAY THEE NAY!
FOR ON THE DAY THOU DOST POSSESS IT-- THAT DAY EARTH DIES!
THIS IS IT!
THE FINAL BATTLE
WITH
THE 4-D MAN!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

WHERE CHAOS RULES!

BACK, YE LORDS AND LADY OF ASGARD!
ON MY WORD, THOU SHALT NOT TAKE ONE STEP CLOSER--
HEED-- OR FALL WHERE THOU DOST STAND!
SO SWEARS THOR!

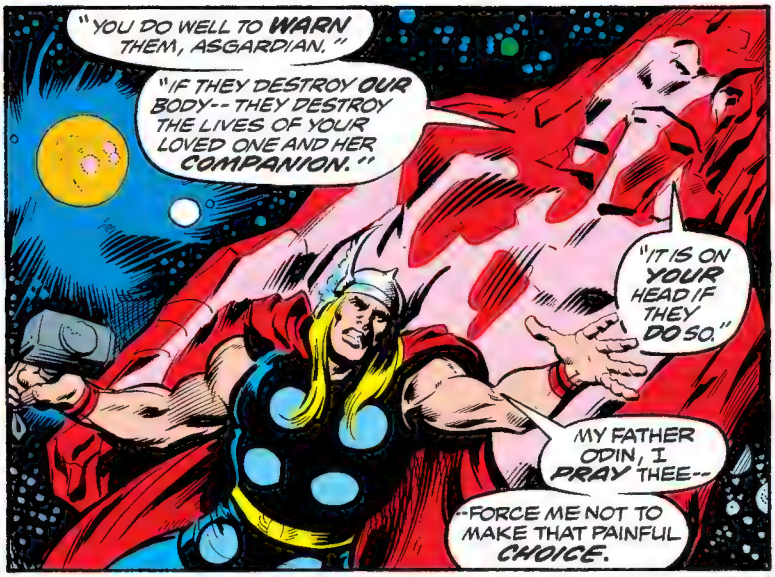
GERRY CONWAY, SCRIPTER
JOHN BUSCEMA & JIM MOONEY, ARTISTS EXTRAORDINAIRE

JOHN COSTANZA, letterer | GEORGE ROUSSOS, colorist

ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

ON THE SURFACE OF THE GOD-JEWEL, XORR, A SILENT TABLEAU: THE SON OF ODIN CROUCHING WITH RAISED HAMMER BEFORE HIS FELLOWS AND HIS LIEGE-- PROTECTING THE ANIMATED FORM OF THE AWESOME JEWEL, AND BY DOING SO, PROTECTING HIS BELOVED LADY SIF AS WELL--SIF, EMBEDDED WITH THE NORN-QUEEN KARNILLA INSIDE THE SCARLET CRYSTAL, HER VERY LIFE TIED TO THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF--XORR!

1598Z

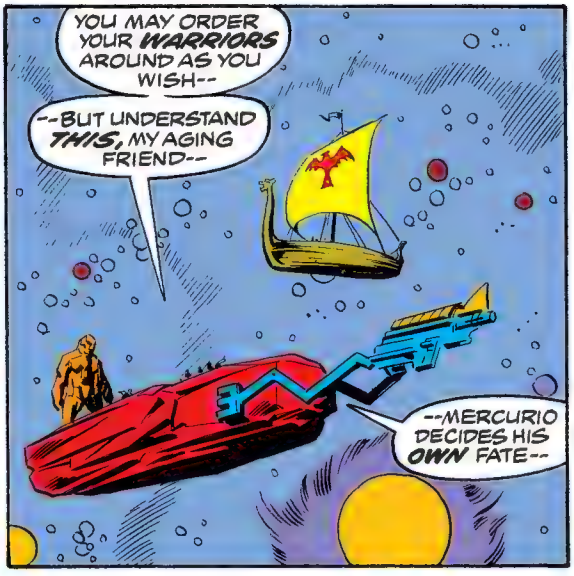

"YOU DO WELL TO WARN THEM, ASGARDIAN."
"IF THEY DESTROY OUR BODY-- THEY DESTROY THE LIVES OF YOUR LOVED ONE AND HER COMPANION."
"IT IS ON YOUR HEAD IF THEY DO SO."
MY FATHER ODIN, I PRAY THEE--
--FORCE ME NOT TO MAKE THAT PAINFUL CHOICE.

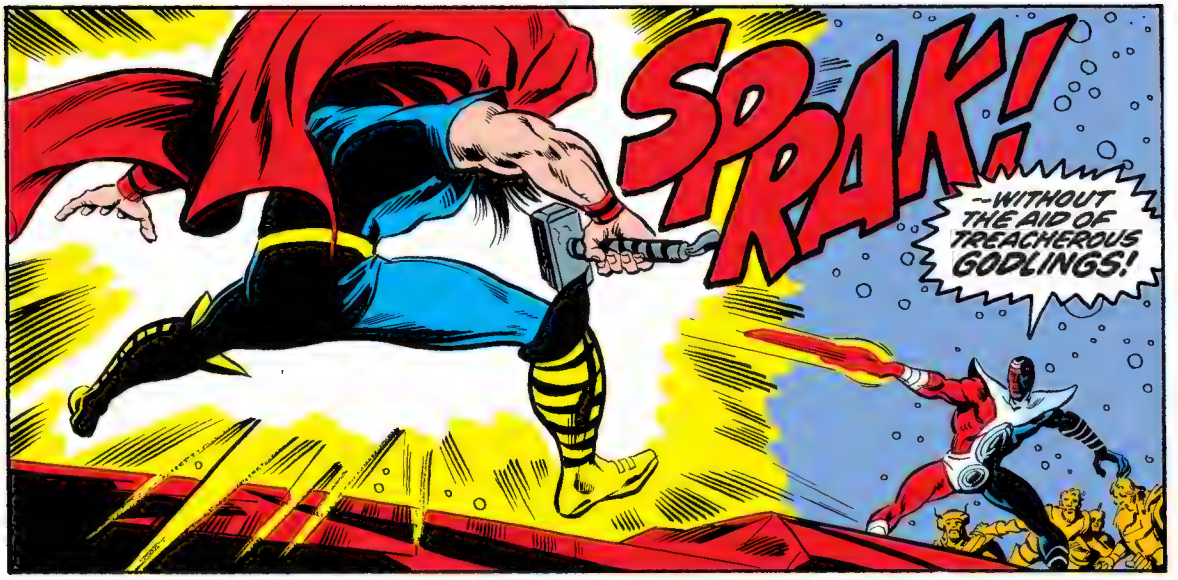
FOR, THOUGH I LOVE THEE AS A TRUE SON--
--IT IS SIF WHO MUST EVER HOLD MY HEART!

THEN LET THERE BE NO CONFRONTATION.
TOO OFTEN HATH FATHER TURNED AGAINST SON--

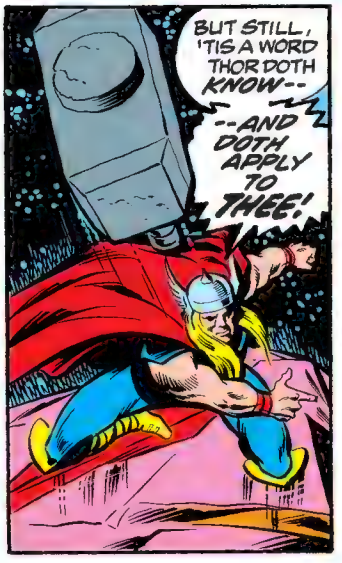
--AND I SAY THEE NOW, ENOUGH!
WE HAVE REGAINED OUR FRIENDSHIP TOO SHORT A TIME AGO TO SURRENDER IT SO FREELY!
THOU MAYEST DO AS THOU WILT, MY SON. ODIN SHALL NOT HINDER THEE.
DO AS THOU DOST WISH.
NO MAN OR GOD WILL STAND AGAINST THEE.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, ODIN--NOT FOR MERCURIO, THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL MAN!
I NEED THIS BLASTED GEM TO SAVE MY PLANET--!

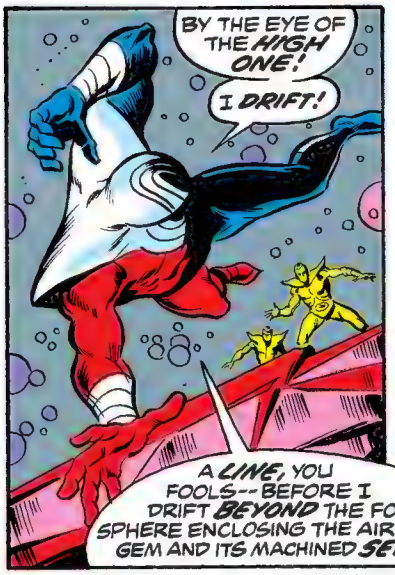

YOU MAY ORDER YOUR WARRIORS AROUND AS YOU WISH--
--BUT UNDERSTAND THIS, MY AGING FRIEND--
--MERCURIO DECIDES HIS OWN FATE--

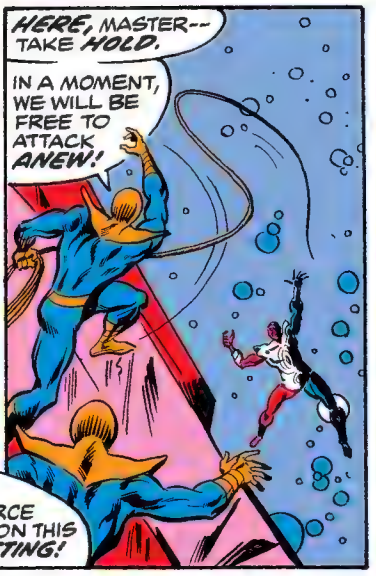

SPRAK!
--WITHOUT THE AID OF TREACHEROUS GODLINGS!

"TREACHEROUS"? BECAUSE WE REFUSE TO HELP THEE AT THE COST OF OUR LADIES' LIVES?
THOU DOST GIVE A STRANGE MEANING TO THE WORD, ALIEN--!

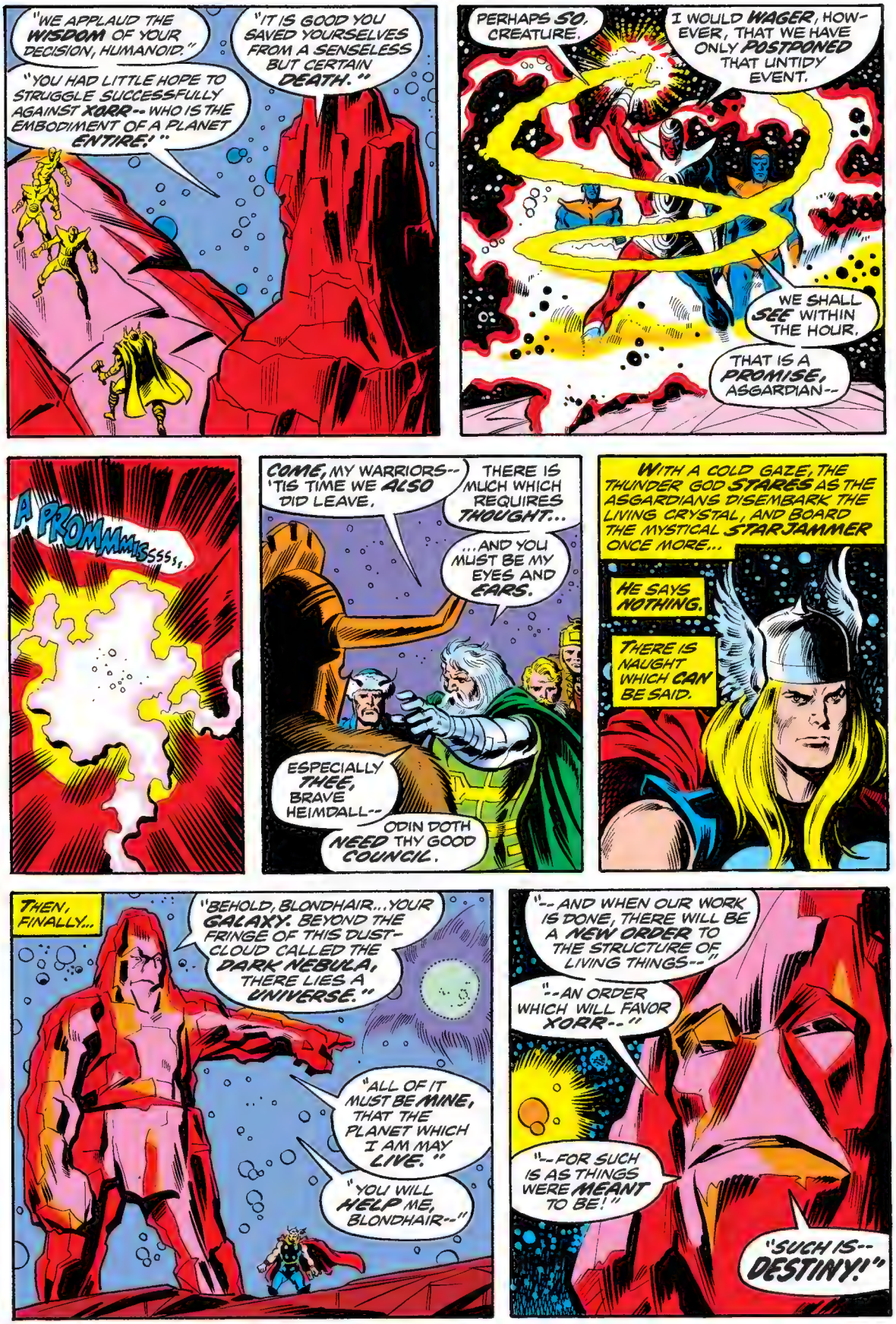

BUT STILL, 'TIS A WORD THOR DOTH KNOW--
--AND DOTH APPLY TO THEE!

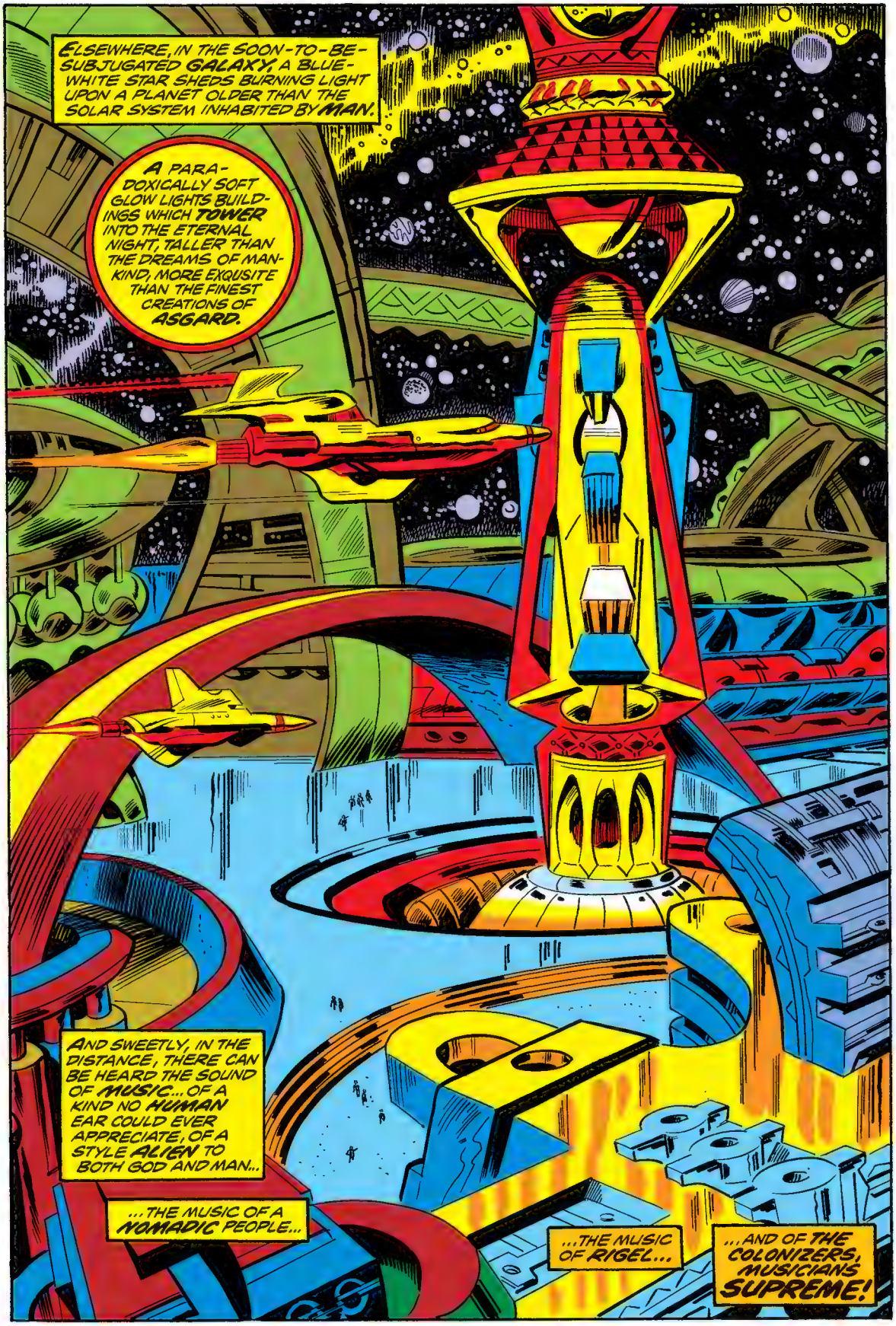
SPOINNNNG!
MASTER, THE EDGE--!
BEWARE THE ACCURSED JEWEL'S EDGE!

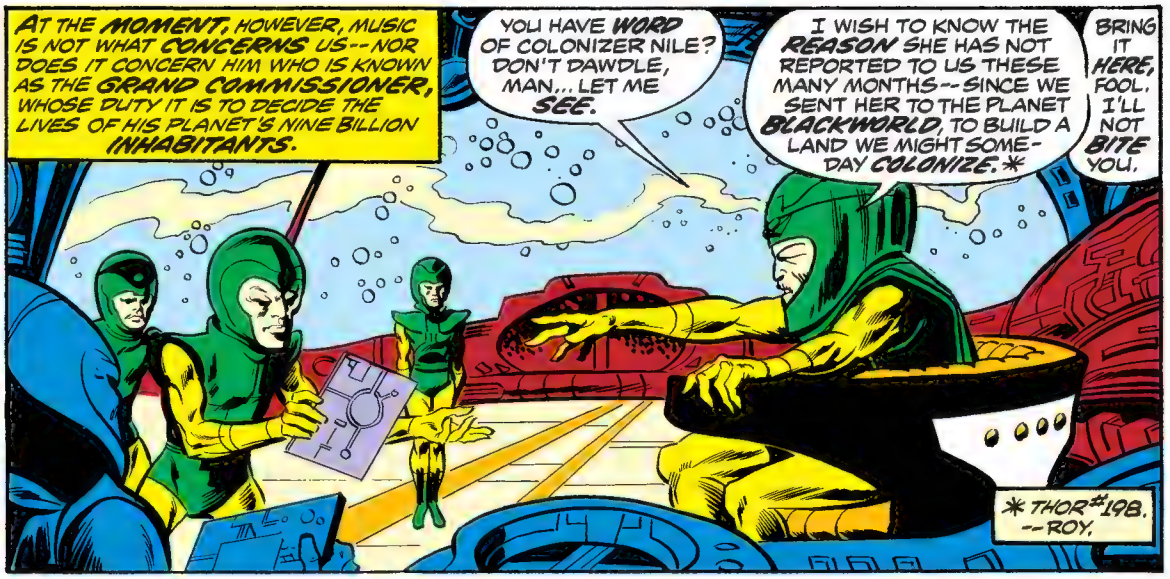

BY THE EYE OF THE HIGH ONE!
I DRIFT!
A LINE, YOU FOOLS--BEFORE I DRIFT BEYOND THE FORCE SPHERE ENCLOSING THE AIR ON THIS GEM AND ITS MACHINED SETTING!


HERE, MASTER--TAKE HOLD.
IN A MOMENT, WE WILL BE FREE TO ATTACK ANEW!

NO, MY BROTHER... I THINK NOT.
THE ODDS ARE AGAINST US NOW... WE MUST WAIT TILL THE MOMENT IS RIPE.

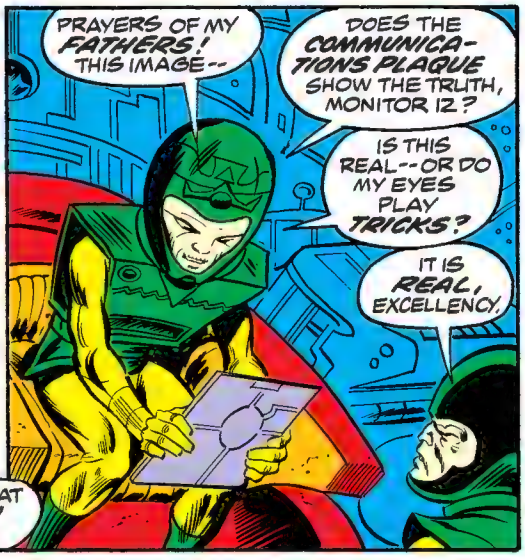

"WE APPLAUD THE WISDOM OF YOUR DECISION, HUMANOID."
"IT IS GOOD YOU SAVED YOURSELVES FROM A SENSELESS BUT CERTAIN DEATH."
"YOU HAD LITTLE HOPE TO STRUGGLE SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST XORR -- WHO IS THE EMBODIMENT OF A PLANET ENTIRE!"
PERHAPS SO, CREATURE.
I WOULD WAGER, HOWEVER, THAT WE HAVE ONLY POSTPONED THAT UNTIDY EVENT.
WE SHALL SEE WITHIN THE HOUR.
THAT IS A PROMISE, ASGARDIAN--
A PROMMMISSSSS.
COME, MY WARRIORS-- 'TIS TIME WE ALSO DID LEAVE.
THERE IS MUCH WHICH REQUIRES THOUGHT...
...AND YOU MUST BE MY EYES AND EARS.
ESPECIALLY THEE, BRAVE HEIMDALL--
ODIN DOTH NEED THY GOOD COUNCIL.
WITH A COLD GAZE, THE THUNDER GOD STARES AS THE ASGARDIANS DISEMBARK THE LIVING CRYSTAL, AND BOARD THE MYSTICAL STARJAMMER ONCE MORE...
HE SAYS NOTHING.
THERE IS NAUGHT WHICH CAN BE SAID.
THEN, FINALLY...
"BEHOLD, BLONDHAIR...YOUR GALAXY. BEYOND THE FRINGE OF THIS DUST-CLOUD CALLED THE DARK NEBULA, THERE LIES A UNIVERSE."
"ALL OF IT MUST BE MINE, THAT THE PLANET WHICH I AM MAY LIVE."
"YOU WILL HELP ME, BLONDHAIR--"
"-- AND WHEN OUR WORK IS DONE, THERE WILL BE A NEW ORDER TO THE STRUCTURE OF LIVING THINGS--"
"--AN ORDER WHICH WILL FAVOR XORR--"
"-- FOR SUCH IS AS THINGS WERE MEANT TO BE!"
"SUCH IS-- DESTINY!"


ELSEWHERE, IN THE SOON-TO-BE-SUBJUGATED GALAXY, A BLUE-WHITE STAR SHEDS BURNING LIGHT UPON A PLANET OLDER THAN THE SOLAR SYSTEM INHABITED BY MAN.
A PARA-DOXICALLY SOFT GLOW LIGHTS BUILD-INGS WHICH TOWER INTO THE ETERNAL NIGHT, TALLER THAN THE DREAMS OF MAN-KIND, MORE EXQUISITE THAN THE FINEST CREATIONS OF ASGARD.
AND SWEETLY, IN THE DISTANCE, THERE CAN BE HEARD THE SOUND OF MUSIC... OF A KIND NO HUMAN EAR COULD EVER APPRECIATE, OF A STYLE ALIEN TO BOTH GOD AND MAN...
...THE MUSIC OF A NOMADIC PEOPLE...
...THE MUSIC OF RIGEL...
...AND OF THE COLONIZERS, MUSICIANS SUPREME!


AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, MUSIC IS NOT WHAT CONCERNS US--NOR DOES IT CONCERN HIM WHO IS KNOWN AS THE GRAND COMMISSIONER, WHOSE DUTY IT IS TO DECIDE THE LIVES OF HIS PLANET'S NINE BILLION INHABITANTS.
YOU HAVE WORD OF COLONIZER NILE? DON'T DAWDLE, MAN... LET ME SEE.
I WISH TO KNOW THE REASON SHE HAS NOT REPORTED TO US THESE MANY MONTHS--SINCE WE SENT HER TO THE PLANET BLACKWORLD, TO BUILD A LAND WE MIGHT SOME-DAY COLONIZE.*
BRING IT HERE, FOOL. I'LL NOT BITE YOU.
* THOR #198. --ROY.

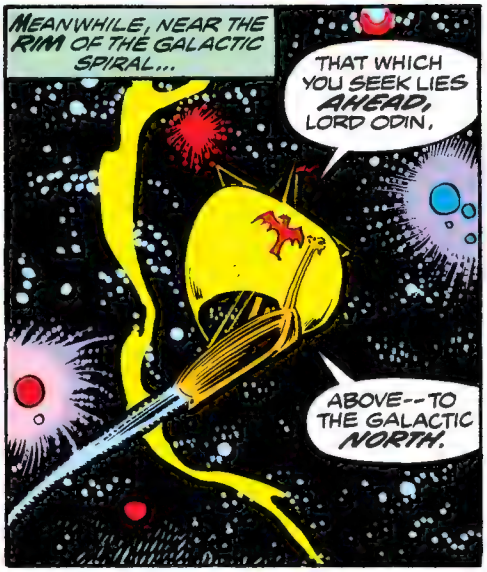
SHE AND SEVERAL ASGARDIANS ARE INVOLVED WITH THE GOD JEWEL XORR, EXCELL-ENCY.
THEN THE JEWEL HAS AT LAST AWAKENED?
INTERESTING.

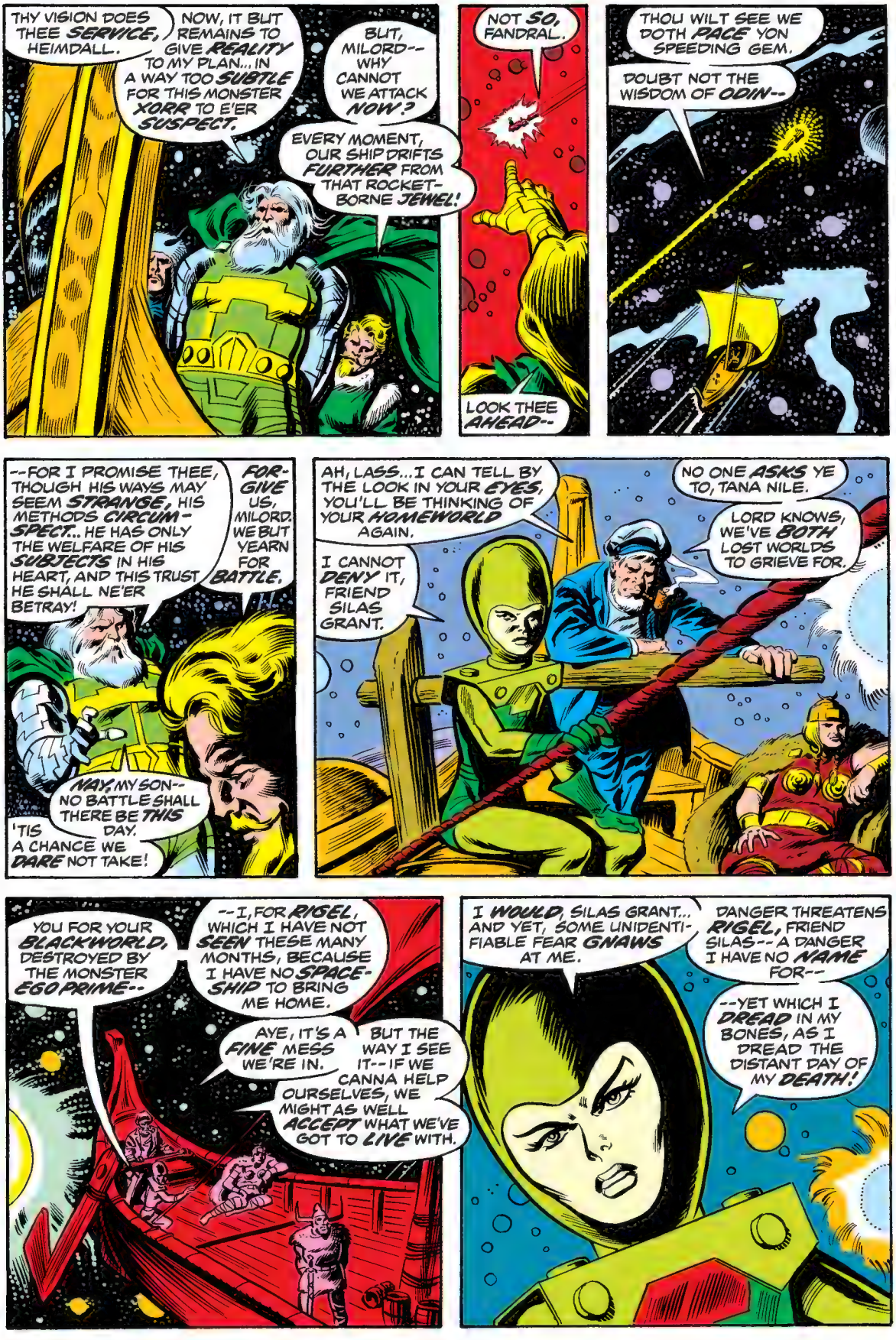
WE MUST OBSERVE THE SITUATION THERE MOST CAREFULLY.
IF XORR BECOMES A THREAT--EH?
WELL, MAN--WHAT EXCITES YOU SO? BRING IT HERE.

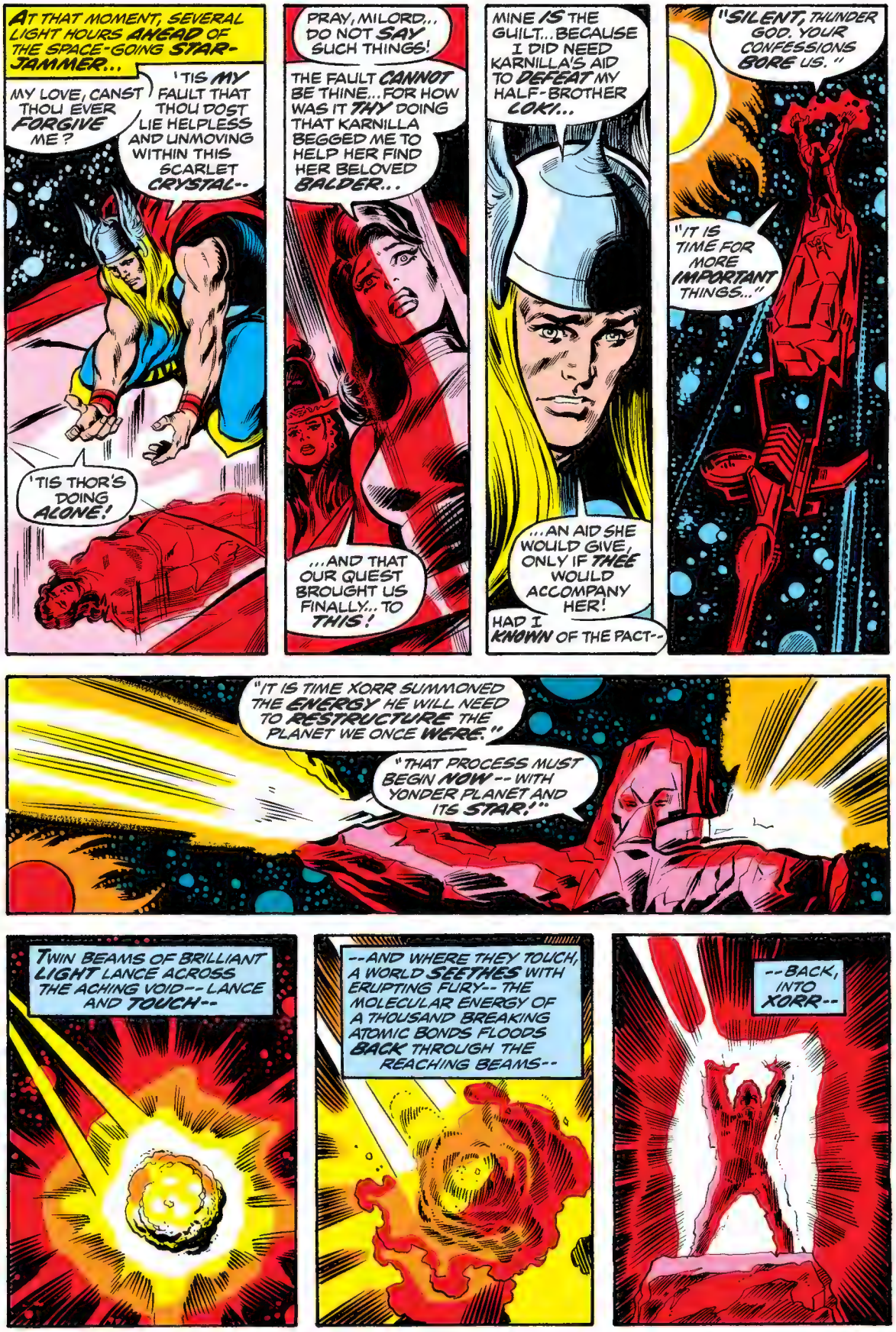

PRAYERS OF MY FATHERS! THIS IMAGE--
DOES THE COMMUNICA-TIONS PLAQUE SHOW THE TRUTH, MONITOR 12?
IS THIS REAL--OR DO MY EYES PLAY TRICKS?
IT IS REAL, EXCELLENCY.

WE RECEIVED THE IMAGE ON THE VISO-SCANNERS BUT SCANT SECONDS AGO.
I RUSHED TO SHOW YOU--!
ENOUGH! READY THE TRANSPORT SHIPS--WE MUST ABANDON RIGEL AT ONCE!
OUR VERY RACE MAY DEPEND ON IT!

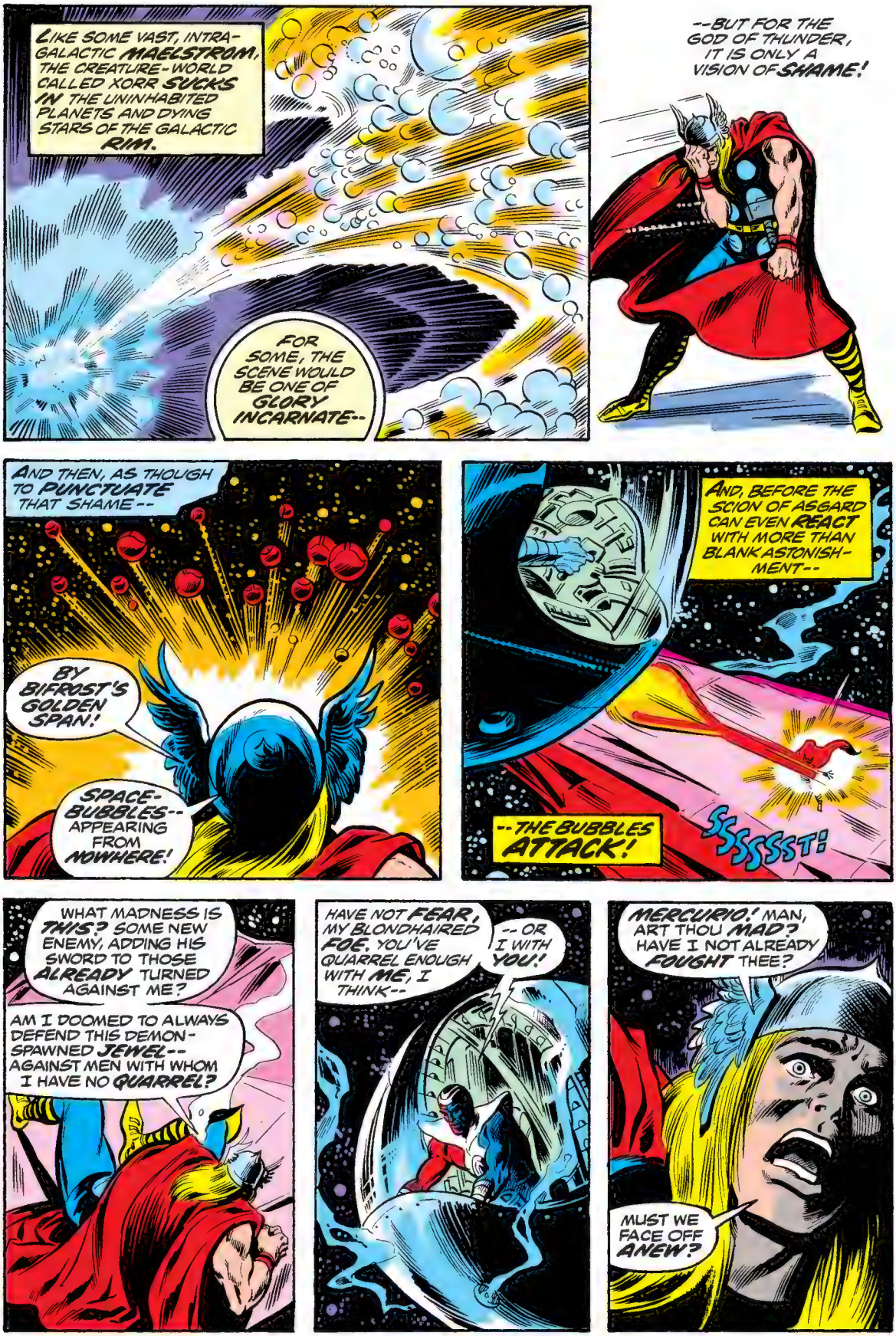
NEVER HAS THE WORLD OF RIGEL BEEN FACED WITH SUCH CALAMITY!
IN TRUTH--NEVER HAS THE FUTURE SEEMED SO GRAVE!

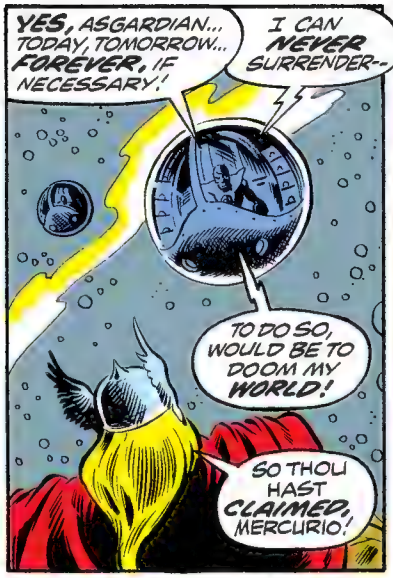

MEANWHILE, NEAR THE RIM OF THE GALACTIC SPIRAL...
THAT WHICH YOU SEEK LIES AHEAD, LORD ODIN.
ABOVE--TO THE GALACTIC NORTH.


THY VISION DOES THEE SERVICE, HEIMDALL.
NOW, IT BUT REMAINS TO GIVE REALITY TO MY PLAN... IN A WAY TOO SUBTLE FOR THIS MONSTER XORR TO E'ER SUSPECT.
BUT, MILORD-- WHY CANNOT WE ATTACK NOW?
EVERY MOMENT, OUR SHIP DRIFTS FURTHER FROM THAT ROCKET-BORNE JEWEL!
NOT SO, FANDRAL.
LOOK THEE AHEAD--
THOU WILT SEE WE DOTH PACE YON SPEEDING GEM.
DOUBT NOT THE WISDOM OF ODIN--
--FOR I PROMISE THEE, THOUGH HIS WAYS MAY SEEM STRANGE, HIS METHODS CIRCUMSPECT... HE HAS ONLY THE WELFARE OF HIS SUBJECTS IN HIS HEART, AND THIS TRUST HE SHALL NE'ER BETRAY!
FORGIVE US, MILORD. WE BUT YEARN FOR BATTLE.
NAY, MY SON-- NO BATTLE SHALL THERE BE THIS 'TIS DAY. A CHANCE WE DARE NOT TAKE!
AH, LASS... I CAN TELL BY THE LOOK IN YOUR EYES, YOU'LL BE THINKING OF YOUR HOMEWORLD AGAIN.
I CANNOT DENY IT, FRIEND SILAS GRANT.
NO ONE ASKS YE TO, TANA NILE.
LORD KNOWS, WE'VE BOTH LOST WORLDS TO GRIEVE FOR.
YOU FOR YOUR BLACKWORLD, DESTROYED BY THE MONSTER EGO PRIME--
--I, FOR RIGEL, WHICH I HAVE NOT SEEN THESE MANY MONTHS, BECAUSE I HAVE NO SPACESHIP TO BRING ME HOME.
AYE, IT'S A FINE MESS WE'RE IN.
BUT THE WAY I SEE IT-- IF WE CANNA HELP OURSELVES, WE MIGHT AS WELL ACCEPT WHAT WE'VE GOT TO LIVE WITH.
I WOULD, SILAS GRANT... AND YET, SOME UNIDENTIFIABLE FEAR GNAWS AT ME.
DANGER THREATENS RIGEL, FRIEND SILAS-- A DANGER I HAVE NO NAME FOR--
--YET WHICH I DREAD IN MY BONES, AS I DREAD THE DISTANT DAY OF MY DEATH!

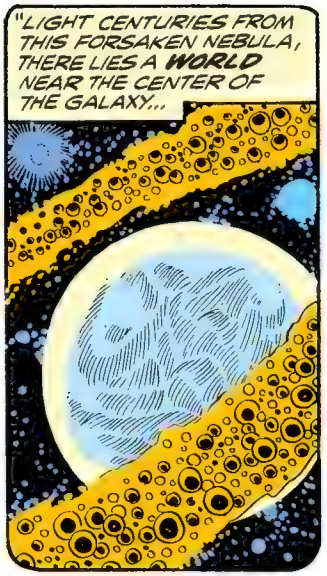

AT THAT MOMENT, SEVERAL LIGHT HOURS AHEAD OF THE SPACE-GOING STAR-JAMMER...
MY LOVE, CANST THOU EVER FORGIVE ME?
'TIS MY FAULT THAT THOU DOST LIE HELPLESS AND UNMOVING WITHIN THIS SCARLET CRYSTAL--
'TIS THOR'S DOING ALONE!
PRAY, MILORD... DO NOT SAY SUCH THINGS!
THE FAULT CANNOT BE THINE... FOR HOW WAS IT THY DOING THAT KARNILLA BEGGED ME TO HELP HER FIND HER BELOVED BALDER...
...AND THAT OUR QUEST BROUGHT US FINALLY... TO THIS!
MINE IS THE GUILT... BECAUSE I DID NEED KARNILLA'S AID TO DEFEAT MY HALF-BROTHER LOKI...
...AN AID SHE WOULD GIVE, ONLY IF THEE WOULD ACCOMPANY HER!
HAD I KNOWN OF THE PACT--
"SILENT, THUNDER GOD. YOUR CONFESSIONS BORE US."
"IT IS TIME FOR MORE IMPORTANT THINGS..."
"IT IS TIME XORR SUMMONED THE ENERGY HE WILL NEED TO RESTRUCTURE THE PLANET WE ONCE WERE."
"THAT PROCESS MUST BEGIN NOW -- WITH YONDER PLANET AND ITS STAR!"
TWIN BEAMS OF BRILLIANT LIGHT LANCE ACROSS THE ACHING VOID -- LANCE AND TOUCH --
--AND WHERE THEY TOUCH, A WORLD SEETHES WITH ERUPTING FURY -- THE MOLECULAR ENERGY OF A THOUSAND BREAKING ATOMIC BONDS FLOODS BACK THROUGH THE REACHING BEAMS --
--BACK, INTO XORR--

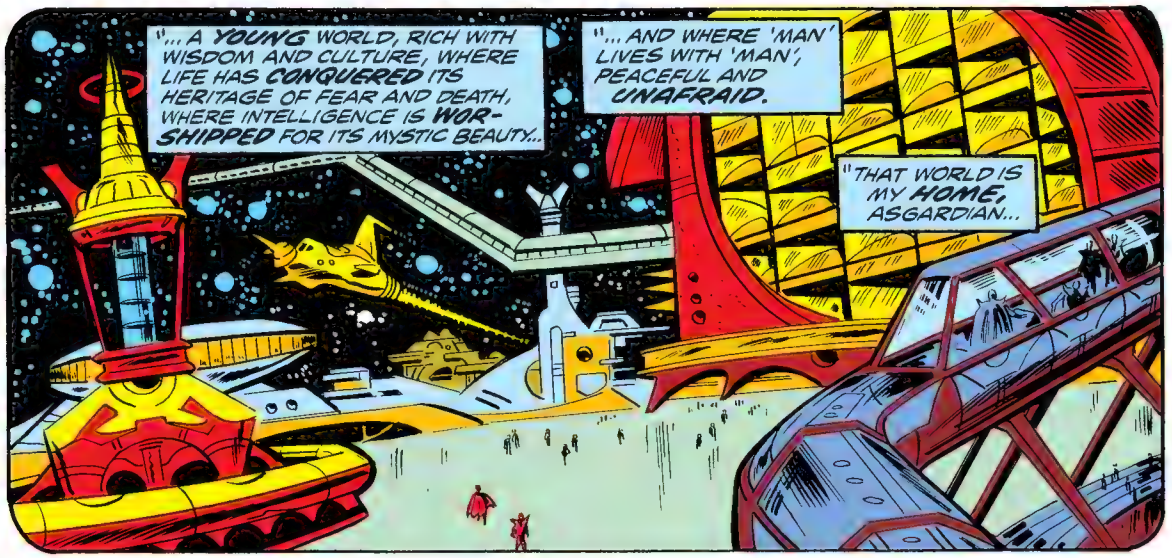
--BACK, INTO THE GOD JEWEL!
"PROTECT YOUR EYES, ASGARDIAN!"
"NOT EVEN YOU CAN WITHSTAND THE GLORY OF XORR!"
NAY, NOR AM I ALONE! MONSTER, THOU MUST CEASE THY WORK--!
I BEG THEE, CEASE--
--LEST THOU DOST DRIVE THE LADIES SIF AND KARNILLA MAD!
"WHAT ARE THEY TO US, GODLING? THEIR LIVES BUT PROVIDE THE BASIC ENERGIES FOR MY EXISTENCE--
"WHEN YONDER WORLDS ARE DESTROYED, YOUR BELOVED'S LIFE WILL HAVE NO MEANING FOR US."
"RATHER THAN OBJECT, YOU SHOULD BE THANKING US, THUNDER GOD--
"--THANKING US, THAT WE ALLOW YOU TO BE PRESENT AT SUCH A MOMENT--!"
"--A MOMENT WHEN OUR NEED WIPES CLEAN THE FACE OF THE PLANET BELOW, AS NO OTHER LIVING CREATURE CAN DO, NOT EVEN THE MUCH-VAUNTED GALACTUS!"
"YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL WE HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO LIVE TILL THIS INSTANT, THUNDER GOD.. WE, WHOSE POWER IS THAT OF A PEOPLED WORLD!"


LIKE SOME VAST, INTRA-GALACTIC MAELSTROM, THE CREATURE-WORLD CALLED XORR SUCKS IN THE UNINHABITED PLANETS AND DYING STARS OF THE GALACTIC RIM.
FOR SOME, THE SCENE WOULD BE ONE OF GLORY INCARNATE--
--BUT FOR THE GOD OF THUNDER, IT IS ONLY A VISION OF SHAME!
AND THEN, AS THOUGH TO PUNCTUATE THAT SHAME--
BY BIFROST'S GOLDEN SPAN!
SPACE-BUBBLES-- APPEARING FROM NOWHERE!
AND, BEFORE THE SCION OF ASGARD CAN EVEN REACT WITH MORE THAN BLANK ASTONISH-MENT--
--THE BUBBLES ATTACK!
SSSSSST!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? SOME NEW ENEMY, ADDING HIS SWORD TO THOSE ALREADY TURNED AGAINST ME?
AM I DOOMED TO ALWAYS DEFEND THIS DEMON-SPAWNED JEWEL-- AGAINST MEN WITH WHOM I HAVE NO QUARREL?
HAVE NOT FEAR, MY BLONDHAIRED FOE, YOU'VE QUARREL ENOUGH WITH ME, I THINK--
-- OR I WITH YOU!
MERCURIO! MAN, ART THOU MAD? HAVE I NOT ALREADY FOUGHT THEE?
MUST WE FACE OFF ANEW?

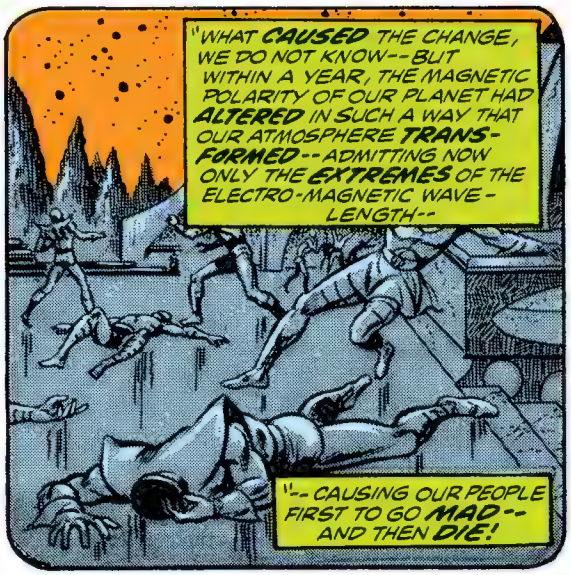

YES, ASGARDIAN... TODAY, TOMORROW.. FOREVER, IF NECESSARY!
I CAN NEVER SURRENDER--
TO DO SO, WOULD BE TO DOOM MY WORLD!
SO THOU HAST CLAIMED, MERCURIO!

AND SUCH IS THE TRUTH, THUNDER GOD-- WERE YOU NOT BLIND TO THOSE AROUND YOU, YOU'D SEE THAT.
LISTEN WELL, THOR... PERHAPS THIS TIME, YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU HEAR!

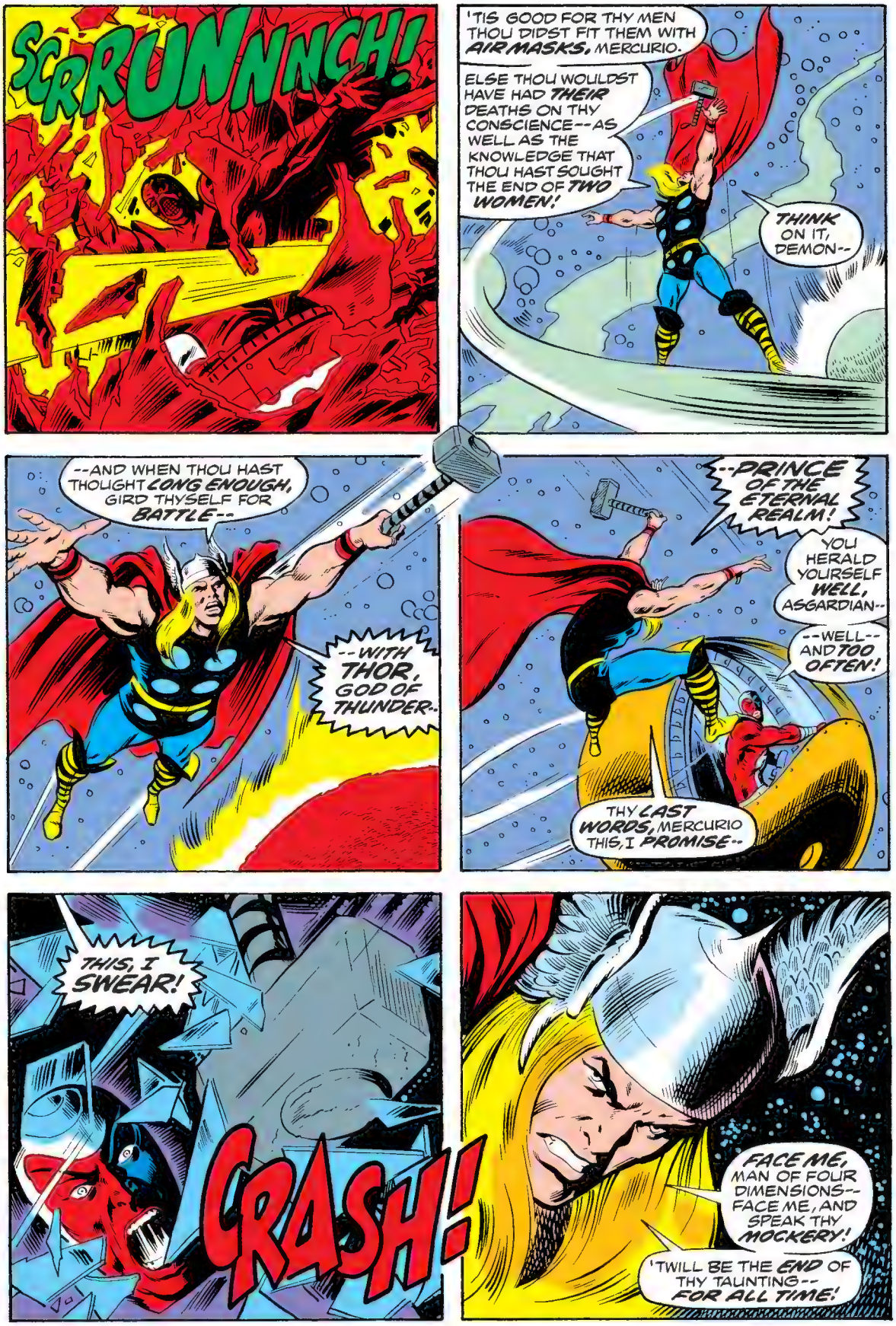

"LIGHT CENTURIES FROM THIS FORSAKEN NEBULA, THERE LIES A WORLD NEAR THE CENTER OF THE GALAXY...

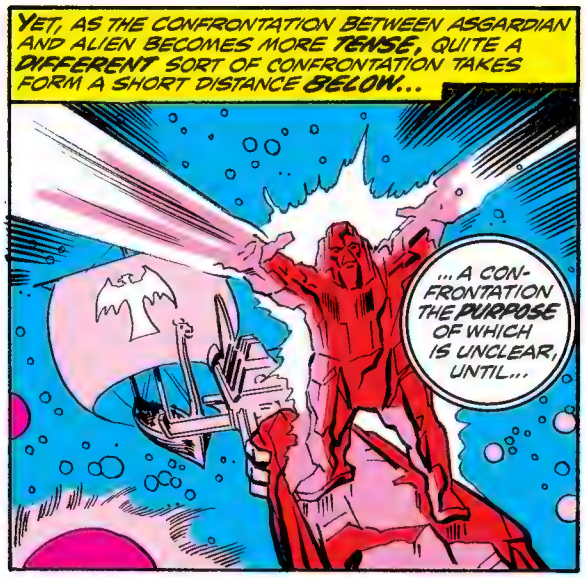

"... A YOUNG WORLD, RICH WITH WISDOM AND CULTURE, WHERE LIFE HAS CONQUERED ITS HERITAGE OF FEAR AND DEATH, WHERE INTELLIGENCE IS WORSHIPPED FOR ITS MYSTIC BEAUTY...
"... AND WHERE 'MAN' LIVES WITH 'MAN', PEACEFUL AND UNAFRAID.
"THAT WORLD IS MY HOME, ASGARDIAN...

"... AND SIX OF YOUR EARTH YEARS AGO, THAT WORLD BECAME THREATENED!
THE SKY-- LOOK AT THE SKY!
THE STARS-- CHANGING, TURNING BLACK-- AND THE SKY--!


"WHAT CAUSED THE CHANGE, WE DO NOT KNOW-- BUT WITHIN A YEAR, THE MAGNETIC POLARITY OF OUR PLANET HAD ALTERED IN SUCH A WAY THAT OUR ATMOSPHERE TRANSFORMED-- ADMITTING NOW ONLY THE EXTREMES OF THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC WAVE-LENGTH--
"-- CAUSING OUR PEOPLE FIRST TO GO MAD-- AND THEN DIE!

"UPON MY RETURN TO MY HOMEWORLD SCANT HOURS AGO, I REQUESTED AN AUDIENCE WITH OUR GREATEST LEADER.
"HE RE-AFFIRMED THE IMPORTANCE OF MY ASSIGNMENT--
"--AND TOLD ME TO USE WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN THIS JEWEL, AND THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC PROPERTIES ITS CRYSTALS POSSESS!"
I INTEND TO DO JUST THAT, ASGARDIAN ...TO USE WHATEVER MEANS I MUST...
... TO GAIN WHAT I MUST GAIN!
ZAK!
ADVANCE, SCOUTS TWO AND THREE:
CONTAIN AND DESTROY THE GOD OF THUNDER--
AT ALL COST, CONTAIN AND DESTROY!
METHINKS THOU SHALT FIND THAT MORE DIFFICULT THAN THOU DOST SUPPOSE.
THOR IS NOT ONE TO FALL EASILY--!
YEA! FOR THEE, VICTORY WILL COME MOST DEARLY--
--IF AT ALL!
FOOM!
SIR--SCOUT TWO HAS BEEN DEMOLISHED!
NOR WILL HE REMAIN ALONE, PUPPET!
HE SHALL HAVE THEE FOR COMPANY!


SCRRUNNNCH!
'TIS GOOD FOR THY MEN THOU DIDST FIT THEM WITH AIR MASKS, MERCURIO.
ELSE THOU WOULDST HAVE HAD THEIR DEATHS ON THY CONSCIENCE--AS WELL AS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THOU HAST SOUGHT THE END OF TWO WOMEN!
THINK ON IT, DEMON--
--AND WHEN THOU HAST THOUGHT LONG ENOUGH, GIRD THYSELF FOR BATTLE--
--WITH THOR, GOD OF THUNDER--
--PRINCE OF THE ETERNAL REALM!
YOU HERALD YOURSELF WELL, ASGARDIAN--
--WELL--AND TOO OFTEN!
THY LAST WORDS, MERCURIO THIS, I PROMISE--
THIS, I SWEAR!
CRASH!
FACE ME, MAN OF FOUR DIMENSIONS--FACE ME, AND SPEAK THY MOCKERY!
'TWILL BE THE END OF THY TAUNTING--FOR ALL TIME!


YET, AS THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ASGARDIAN AND ALIEN BECOMES MORE TENSE, QUITE A DIFFERENT SORT OF CONFRONTATION TAKES FORM A SHORT DISTANCE BELOW...
...A CONFRONTATION THE PURPOSE OF WHICH IS UNCLEAR, UNTIL...

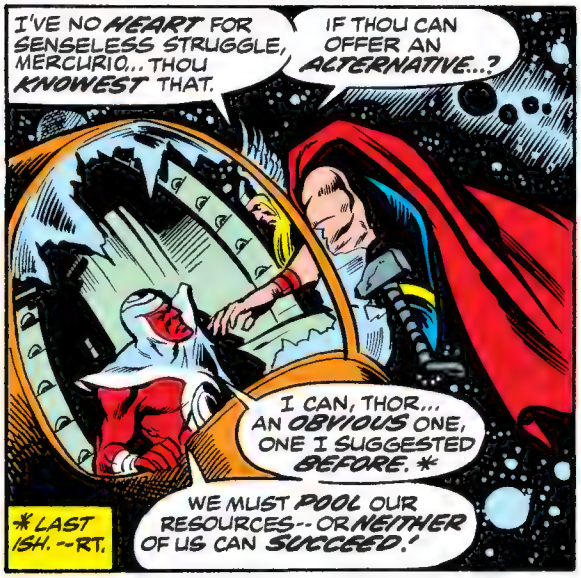
PLUTO'S FIRE! ARE WE TO PACE THE JEWEL FOREVER?
WILL WE NE'ER TRADE BLOW FOR BLOODY BLOW?

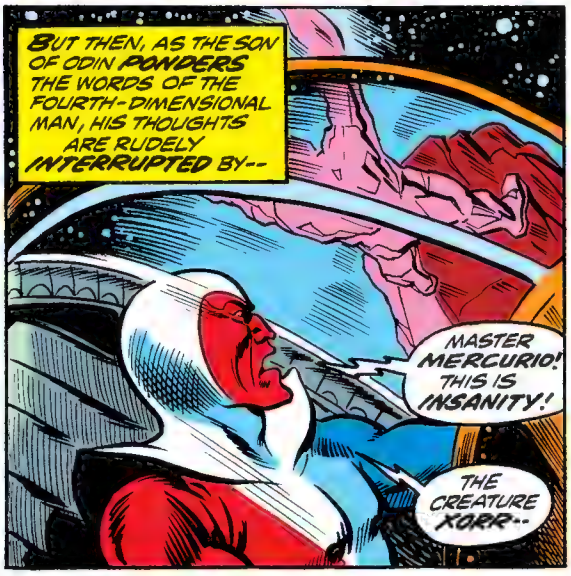
PATIENCE, MY FRIEND ...METHINKS I BEGIN TO SEE.
WE DO NOT PACE YON CRYSTAL...

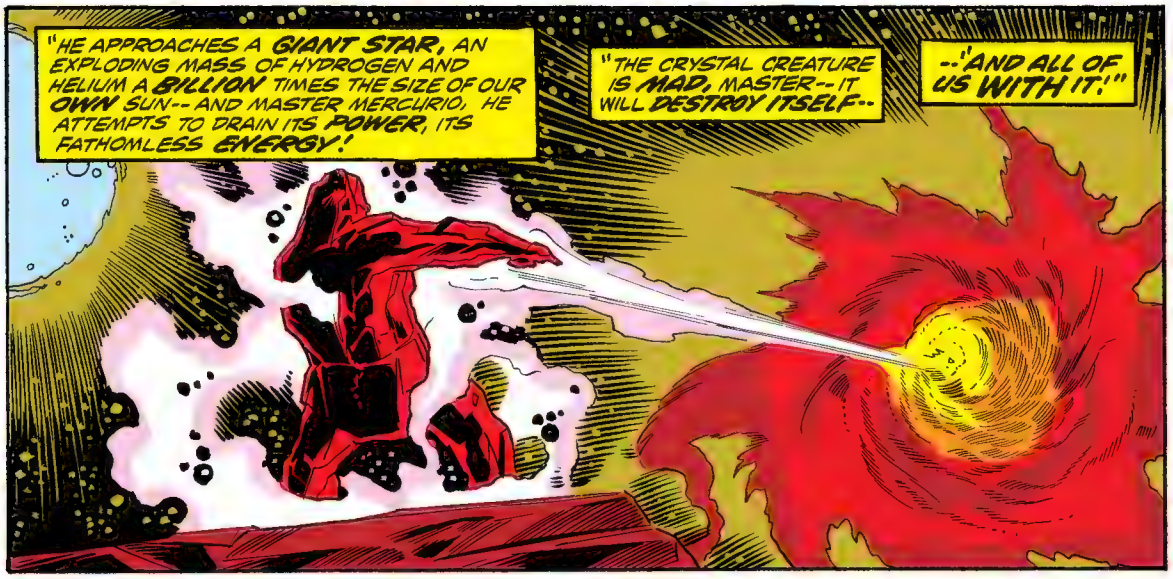
...WE GUIDE. AYE, FANDRAL... THOU HAST PERCEIVED AND, IN THE METHOD. TRUTH, THE GOAL SHALL SOON BECOME APPARENT!
SO SPEAKS ODIN. SO SHALL IT BE!

AND, AT THAT VERY INSTANT, ABOARD A BREACHED SPACE BUBBLE DRIFTING ABOVE THE RACING XORR...
WAIT, THUNDER GOD--THERE MUST BE A MORE USEFUL ENDING TO OUR CONFLICT!
I COULD FREEZE YOU IN A SECOND WITH MY LEFT HAND--OR YOU COULD CRUSH ME--

--BUT WHAT GOOD WOULD THAT DO MY WORLD, OR YOUR WOMEN? I'D STILL HAVE TO PASS THE MONSTER XORR--
--AND YOU STILL MUST THINK OF A WAY TO ULTIMATELY FREE YOUR ENTRAPPED LOVE!
PERHAPS WE CAN BOTH WIN... IF YOU'RE WILLING!


I'VE NO HEART FOR SENSELESS STRUGGLE, MERCURIO... THOU KNOWEST THAT.
IF THOU CAN OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE...?
I CAN, THOR... AN OBVIOUS ONE, ONE I SUGGESTED BEFORE. *
WE MUST POOL OUR RESOURCES--OR NEITHER OF US CAN SUCCEED!
* LAST ISH. --RT.

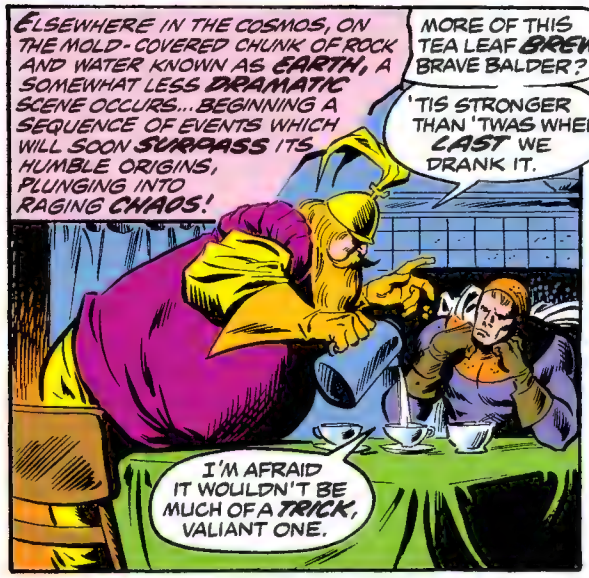

BUT THEN, AS THE SON OF ODIN PONDERS THE WORDS OF THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL MAN, HIS THOUGHTS ARE RUDELY INTERRUPTED BY--
MASTER MERCURIO! THIS IS INSANITY!
THE CREATURE XORR--


"HE APPROACHES A GIANT STAR, AN EXPLODING MASS OF HYDROGEN AND HELIUM A BILLION TIMES THE SIZE OF OUR OWN SUN-- AND MASTER MERCURIO, HE ATTEMPTS TO DRAIN ITS POWER, ITS FATHOMLESS ENERGY!
"THE CRYSTAL CREATURE IS MAD, MASTER-- IT WILL DESTROY ITSELF--
--!AND ALL OF US WITH IT!"

DROPPING TO THE JEWEL'S SURFACE TO CONFIRM THE SCOUT'S OBSERVATION, THE UNLIKELY ALLIES NOTE SOMETHING ELSE OF PASSING INTEREST..
COOK, MERCURIO.
DOST THOU SEE?
"SEE?" THE LIGHT BLINDS ME!

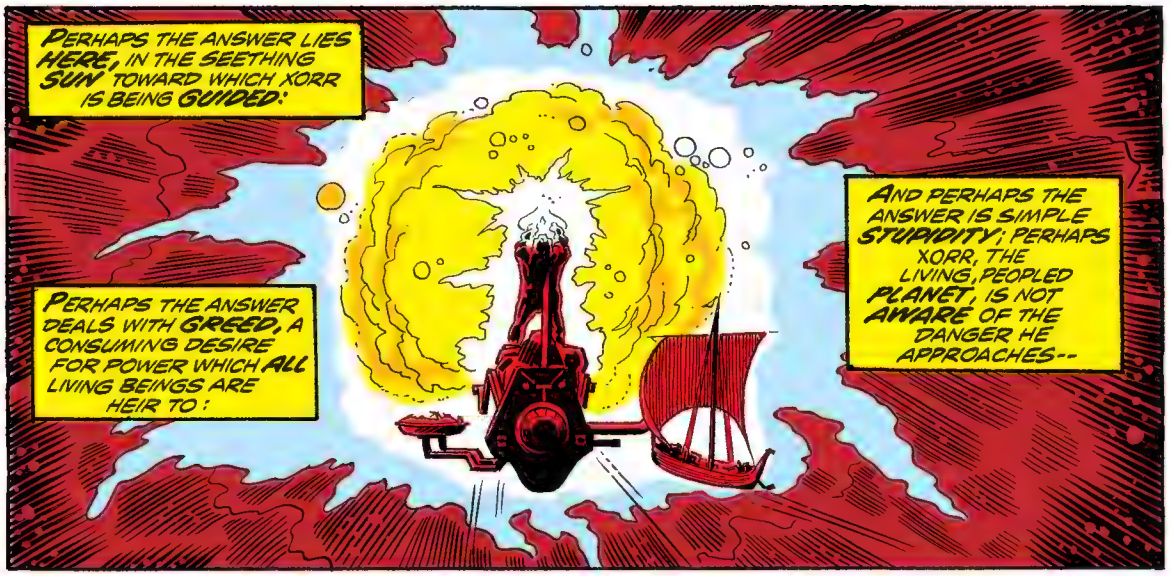
THEN I SHALL BE THINE EYES, ALIEN--
--AND TELL THEE THIS: THE STARJAMMER PRODS THIS JEWEL TOWARD YONDER STAR--

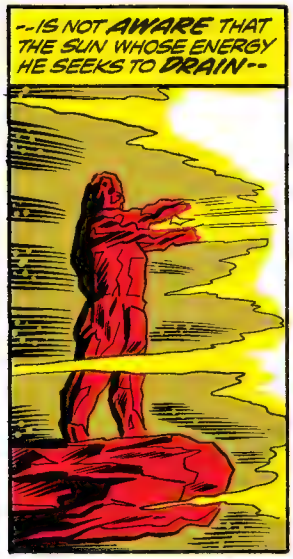
--AND WHAT MEANING THAT PRODDING HAS, WE DARE NOT EVEN CONSIDER!
THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE REASON...!
THEN PERHAPS WE'D BETTER BEGIN, THOR.
THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME AT ALL!

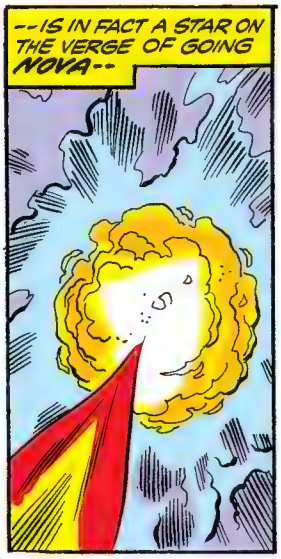

ELSEWHERE IN THE COSMOS, ON THE MOLD-COVERED CHUNK OF ROCK AND WATER KNOWN AS EARTH, A SOMEWHAT LESS DRAMATIC SCENE OCCURS... BEGINNING A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WHICH WILL SOON SURPASS ITS HUMBLE ORIGINS, PLUNGING INTO RAGING CHAOS!
MORE OF THIS TEA LEAF BREW, BRAVE BALDER?
'TIS STRONGER THAN 'TWAS WHEN LAST WE DRANK IT.
I'M AFRAID IT WOULDN'T BE MUCH OF A TRICK, VALIANT ONE.

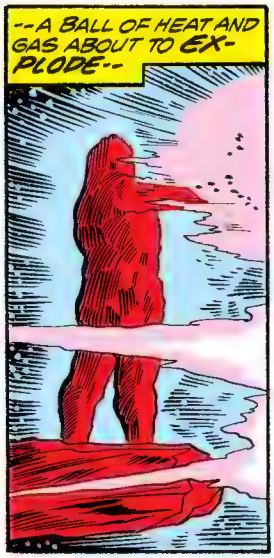
NOW THAT MY STRENGTH AND SANITY HAVE RETURNED, EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS PLANET BORES ME... EVEN THIS TEA, WHICH ONCE I LOVED.
THOU DOST KNOW WHY, DOST THOU NOT, VOLSTAGG?

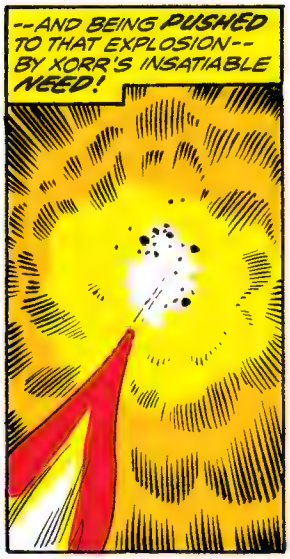
I YEARN TO RETURN TO ASGARD-- TO FACE THOSE DEMONS WHICH NEAR DROVE ME MAD. *
'TIS A CALL I CANNOT IGNORE, AND THOUGH THOU HAST BEEN GIVEN TO GUARD ME, I CANNOT EXPECT THEE TO--
* THOR #212.--RT.
SAY NO MORE! VALIANT VOLSTAGG WILL ACCOMPANY THEE TO ANY DANGER--
--AND EVER SHALL HE GUARD THY UNPROTECTED REAR!
TO THE ROOF, THEN!
THE ROOF? THOU MEANEST TO LEAVE SO--SO QUICKLY?
WHY SHOULD TIME BE FURTHER LOST?
WE MUST ACT, IF E'ER WE ARE TO REACH OUR NATIVE LAND!
WITH A SWIRL OF RELEASED POWER, BALDER'S BLADE SINGS THROUGH THE DUSKY TWILIGHT, AND WHEN ITS SONG ENDS--
--IT CUTS THE BRISK DRY AIR OF ASGARD!
BY MY HAG WIFE'S CURSED GLARE!
THE STREETS OF ASGARD ARE EMPTY--THE ALLEYS SWEPT CLEAN!
ART THOU SURE THIS IS THE ASGARD OF OUR DREAMS?
QUITE, FAT ONE, HOWEVER, IT DOTH SEEM WE--EH?
LISTEN, VOLSTAGG: FOOTSTEPS, MARCHING--THE MUTTER OF VOICES!
STARS! LOOK THEE, VOLSTAGG--LOOK!
WHAT IT IS THAT BALDER SEES WILL REMAIN A MYSTERY TILL OUR NEXT ISSUE; FOR NOW, WE MUST SETTLE FOR THE RESOLUTION OF SEVERAL RATHER CURIOUS CURRENT RIDDLES--
SUCH AS THIS ONE: WHY DOES THE LORD OF ASGARD SEEMINGLY TOY WITH THE CREATURE MENACING HIS GALACTIC HOME; AND IF THIS IS NOT TOYING--THEN WHAT REASON LIES BEHIND THIS UNSEEMLY PRODDING--
--THIS CHILDLIKE GAME?

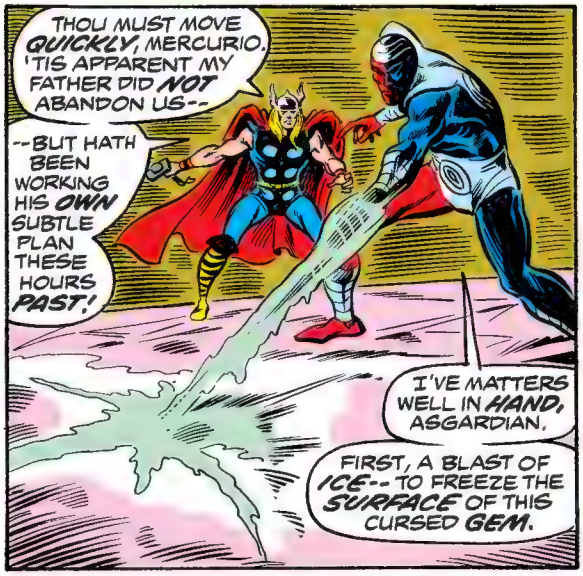

PERHAPS THE ANSWER LIES HERE, IN THE SEETHING SUN TOWARD WHICH XORR IS BEING GUIDED!
PERHAPS THE ANSWER DEALS WITH GREED, A CONSUMING DESIRE FOR POWER WHICH ALL LIVING BEINGS ARE HEIR TO!
AND PERHAPS THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE STUPIDITY! PERHAPS XORR, THE LIVING, PEOPLED PLANET, IS NOT AWARE OF THE DANGER HE APPROACHES--

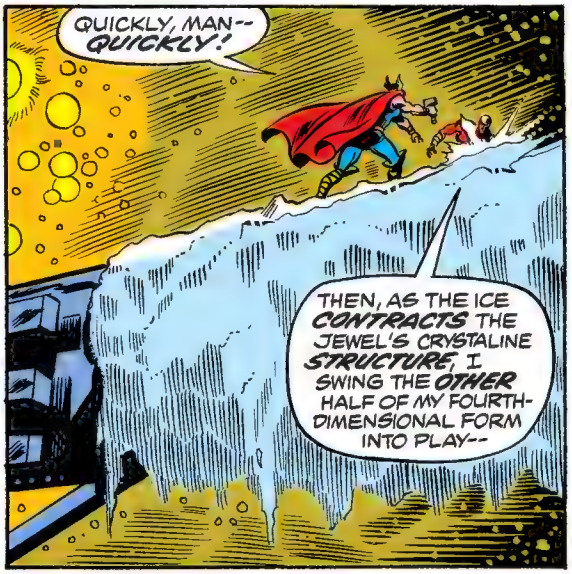

--IS NOT AWARE THAT THE SUN WHOSE ENERGY HE SEEKS TO DRAIN--


--IS IN FACT A STAR ON THE VERGE OF GOING NOVA--


--A BALL OF HEAT AND GAS ABOUT TO EX-PLODE--


--AND BEING PUSHED TO THAT EXPLOSION-- BY XORR'S INSATIABLE NEED!


THOU MUST MOVE QUICKLY, MERCURIO. 'TIS APPARENT MY FATHER DID NOT ABANDON US--
--BUT HATH BEEN WORKING HIS OWN SUBTLE PLAN THESE HOURS PAST!
I'VE MATTERS WELL IN HAND, ASGARDIAN.
FIRST, A BLAST OF ICE-- TO FREEZE THE SURFACE OF THIS CURSED GEM.


QUICKLY, MAN-- QUICKLY!
THEN, AS THE ICE CONTRACTS THE JEWEL'S CRYSTALINE STRUCTURE, I SWING THE OTHER HALF OF MY FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL FORM INTO PLAY--

--AND BLAST THE ICE WITH IRRESISTABLE HEAT!
KKKRAK!
THOU HAST SUCCEEDED, MERCURIO! THE COMBINED ENERGIES--THE CONTRACTING COLD AND EXPANDING HEAT--
--THEY HAVE SHATTERED THE JEWEL--AND MY LADY IS FREE!
QUIT THIS PLACE WHILST THOU CAN, MERCURIO!
WE SHALL FOLLOW THEE AT ONCE!
WHILE, ABOVE THE ASGARDIANS, OBLIVIOUS TO ALL THAT SURROUNDS HIM...
"POWER... POWER! MORE ENERGY THAN EVER WE DREAMED!"
"IN AN INSTANT--WE DRAW ENOUGH STRENGTH TO REBUILD A HUNDRED UNIVERSES--"
"--A THOUSAND WORLDS IN OUR IMAGE, PLANETS WHOSE GLORY WILL BE THAT THEY ARE OURS, TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY OUR CREATION!"
"MAGNIFICENCE! THE DREAM OF AN ETERNITY COME TRUE!"
NOW, MY SON THOR... WE MUST BE AWAY.
YON GOD-HEAD DOTH NEAR THE END OF HIS IMAGINED GLORY...
...AND 'TIS NOT AN ENDING FIT FOR ANY LIVING BEING TO WITNESS--MAN OR GOD!
'TIS AN ENDING WHICH WILL SEEM TO CONSUME REALITY--AND FOR A TIME, IT WILL!

SUPER-NOVA: WHEN A STAR GROWS TOO HOT TO CONTAIN ITS OWN POWER.
ONE INSTANT, IT BURNS MORE BRIGHTLY THAN E'ER BEFORE-- AND IN THE NEXT--
--GONE!
THEN, FROM THE DARKNESS COME SHIPS--
--AND LIKE WANDERERS ON A SHORE, THEY COLLECT THE DRIFTING DEBRIS--
--OF USE TO THEM NOW--IN THEIR WORLD.
A PITY WE COULD NOT HAVE JOINED FORCES EARLIER, THUNDER GOD.
WE MIGHT HAVE SAVED OURSELVES MUCH AGONY, DON'T YOU THINK?
TRUE ENOUGH, BE WELL, ASGARDIAN.
WHAT MATTER, THESE "MIGHT-BE'S"?
IN THE END,, WE ARE FRIENDS.
PERHAPS WE'LL MEET AGAIN.
THE COLLECTING OF THE CRYSTALLINE FRAGMENTS GOES QUICKLY-- AND WHEN THE REMAINS OF XORR, THE GOD JEWEL, HAVE BEEN FULLY ACCOUNTED FOR--
--MERCURIO AND HIS MEN VANISH--
--AND SPACE SEEMS CALM ONCE MORE.
AND THOUGH, AT OTHER TIMES, THESE LOVERS MIGHT SPEAK...
...THIS TIME THEY NEED NO WORDS...
...ONLY EACH OTHER...
...AND THE PEACE OF A LONG VOYAGE HOME.
NEXT ISSUE: WHEN GODS GO MAD!

BIOGRAPHIES

GERRY CONWAY

In 1969, 16-year-old Gerry Conway was shopping short stories to DC and Marvel for their horror anthology books. By 1976, Conway had worked his way up to Marvel's editor in chief. In between, he logged highlight after highlight as writer for both companies.

After establishing a pedigree with horror short stories, Conway quickly became the regular writer of *Daredevil*, *Sub-Mariner* and *Iron Man*. He also began runs on *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *Thor*, picking up both titles from none other than Stan Lee. He scripted both for nearly 50 issues, writing controversial and classic tales including "The Death of Gwen Stacy," the first appearance of the Punisher, and the introduction of Harry Osborn as the Green Goblin. Cueing off his early interest in horror stories, Conway took advantage of Marvel's burgeoning line of horror comics, launching *Werewolf By Night* and *Man-Thing*, as well as writing the first issue of *Tomb of Dracula*.

In 1976, he was handed the top job at Marvel before transitioning to DC Comics. One of his first big assignments was writing the script for one of the first inter-company crossovers, *Superman vs. The Amazing Spider-Man.* Shortly thereafter, he began a long tenure on prime DC titles like *Superboy & The Legion of Super-Heroes*, *World's Finest* and *Wonder Woman*. He also introduced Firestorm with Al Milgrom in 1978, scribing all five issues of the short-lived '70s incarnation.

As the '80s dawned, he started a long run writing both key Batman titles, *Detective Comics* and *Batman*, and continued his run on *Justice League of America*, a stint that began in earnest in 1978 and would end with the dismantling of the infamous JLA Detroit in 1986. During this era, he also revived Firestorm with artist Pat Broderick; this time the title found traction and Conway wrote the first 53 issues. A return to Marvel in the late '80s saw Conway tackling two of the three Spider-Man titles: *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and *Web of Spider-Man*.

During this period, Conway was asserting himself as a writer in film and television. His early '80s screenplay collaborations with Roy Thomas resulted in the animated film *Fire and Ice* and barbarian sequel *Conan the Destroyer*. By the late '80s, his opportunities in television writing had expanded, and he left comics to pursue writing and producing for *Matlock*, *Father Dowling Mysteries*, *Diagnosis: Murder* and *Law & Order*.

Today, Conway continues writing and producing for television and has recently returned to script the occasional comic. He resides in California with his wife and their daughter.

JOHN BUSCEMA

Though primarily known for his long tenure as one of Marvel Comics' most prolific pencilers, John Buscema began his celebrated career at the age of 21 with Timely Comics. After Timely closed its in-house Bullpen, Buscema pursued comics work for a time before he left comics altogether for advertising in 1958.

When he returned to comics, however, he did so with a vengeance. Stan Lee recruited him away from advertising and quickly ensconced him into the upper ranks of Marvel artists. Picking up where *Avengers* mainstay Don Heck left off, "Big John" began what would be one of the title's definitive artistic runs. The much-anticipated *Silver Surfer* series was launched with Buscema at the helm, and top-tier books like *Fantastic Four* and *Thor* were entrusted to his care after Jack Kirby left Marvel for DC Comics.

Buscema's bold, muscular artwork commanded the comic-book page with realistic figurework that represented the next evolutionary step in post-Kirby Marvel Comics style. The respect accorded him within Marvel as an artist's artist was of such renown that he literally wrote the book on drawing, composing *How To Draw Comics the Marvel Way* with Stan Lee, the classic "how to" book in comic-book illustration.

He worked from the '70s through the '90s on nearly every title in the Marvel stable, including his personal favorite, *Conan the Barbarian*, with Roy Thomas. He retired in 1996, but returned every now and then to the comics scene until he passed away after a battle with cancer in 2002, the same year he was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

SAL BUSCEMA

Without a doubt one of comics' most prolific artists, "Our Pal" Sal Buscema joined Marvel in 1968 shortly after his elder brother, John. Tackling inking duties on *Silver Surfer* and *Fantastic Four*, including the all-time classic *Silver Surfer* #4, Buscema quickly graduated to penciling. He was an anchor of the Marvel line in the 1970s with long runs on books like *Captain America*, *Marvel Team-Up* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and a 100-plus issue run on *The Incredible Hulk*. Buscema was also behind defining the tone on early issues of *The Defenders*, *Rom* and *The New Mutants*. His career as one of Marvel's most versatile artists lasted throughout the '70s and into the '90s. In 1988, he returned to *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and over the next ten years penciled every issue but two from #134 through #238 (and inked the vast majority as well!) Although he retired in the late '90s, readers can still see his name on comics credits from time to time, including inking work on the cult hit *Spider-Girl*.

JIM MOONEY

A prolific comics artist since the 1940s, Jim Mooney proved nimble enough at penciling and inking that he gained a reputation for both disciplines that kept him in constant employ for decades. Tabbed by his peers with the nickname "Gentleman" Jim for his positive and polite demeanor, he became an artist revered by fans of both DC and Marvel Comics.

Mooney broke into the business working under the tutelage of such luminaries as Will Eisner, Lou Fine and Nick Cardy. He would grow to find his artistic voice alongside peers like George Tuska and Ruben Moreira, freelancing for many of the era's most prominent publishers. As the decade progressed, his work at DC took prominence. Mooney was crafting stories of the Dynamic Duo in both *Batman* and *Detective Comics*, plus Robin stories in *Star-Spangled Comics*. He also drew many of

the seminal adventures of Tommy Tomorrow in *Action Comics*. It was while drawing Supergirl in the pages of *Action Comics*, however, that Mooney crafted an enduring legacy with his clean, illustrative take on Superman's cousin.

Mooney worked at DC until 1968, when his bold, streamlined style was called upon to team with John Romita on *The Amazing Spider-Man*. It would be the beginning of a relationship with the web-slinger that would lead to almost two decades of memorable penciling and inking of the character, including *The Spectacular Spider-Man*, *Marvel Team-Up* and the flagship title. Mooney lent his hand to virtually every title Marvel produced in one way or another including noteworthy runs on *Ghost Rider*, *Man-Thing* and *Omega the Unknown*.

In 2008, Mooney passed away at the age of 89 after an extended illness.

DON PERLIN

A talented stalwart that put all of his creativity into his work on long-running series like *Ghost Rider* and *The Defenders*, Don Perlin plied his talents in virtually every discipline in the comic book field—penciling, inking, helping introduce new characters and sometimes editing and writing. A student of Burne Hogarth, Perlin launched his career in 1951, drawing horror comics for various publishers and also penciling Will Eisner's *The Spirit*. After serving in the Army, Perlin returned to comics with Harvey in the late '50s, as well as Charlton in the '60s. In 1973, he began his long association with Marvel finishing John Buscema's art on *Thor* and inking several titles. He took over *Werewolf By Night* from Mike Ploog, penciling and inking the book for much of the next two years. He also penciled and inked the supernatural adventures of Johnny Blaze in *Ghost Rider*, his name becoming very closely identified with Marvel's monster biker. In the '80s, he drew *The Defenders* for a long run before turning his attention to Marvel's adaptation of Hasbro's *Transformers*. His early '90s work on Valiant's *Solar, Man of the Atom* and *Bloodshot* was extremely popular, after which, Perlin went into semi-retirement.

MARIE SEVERIN

Billing as "The Nicest Person in Comics" may accurately describe the high esteem in which Marie Severin's peers have always held her, but the moniker doesn't approach the high quality of her work. Fortunately, it doesn't need to: a cursory glance at her accomplishments will settle the issue of her artistic legacy. Along with Ramona Fradon, Severin stands as one of the first women to get through the door of the boys' club of comic professionals.

Severin and her older brother, John, learned how to draw early in their lives, both trained by their mother and father. In her early twenties she was hired at Bill Gaines' E.C. Comics, taking on a variety of tasks including inking and coloring, eventually becoming Harvey Kurtzman's right-hand gal and soaking up as much of his zany outlook as possible.

In 1967 Severin took a job at Marvel, first penciling Doctor Strange in *Strange Tales* and then the Incredible Hulk in *Tales to Astonish*, which she drew for over a year before teaching Herb Trimpe the ropes. In addition to her regular penciling and inking gigs, Severin became one of the top cover artists for Marvel and continued her work as one of the field's most accomplished colorists. All while keeping the Bullpen lively!

Throughout her career, Severin developed an artistic versatility that allowed her to master the bestial fury of the Incredible Hulk, the regal power of the Sub-Mariner and the super-hero satire of *Not Brand Echh!* In fact, it could be said that Severin's most indelible contribution to the Marvel Age was in that singular Marvel humor mag, where her *MAD*-laced bent for humor was allowed to flourish.

More accomplishments continued into the '70s, when she worked in tandem with John Severin on *Kull the Conqueror*, a work she considers among her personal favorites, as well as designing the costume for The Cat (later Hellcat). She also designed the costume for the first incarnation of Spider-Woman. Her peers proudly brought her into the ranks of the Eisner Hall of Fame in 2001. Today, Severin is retired, but can still be seen contributing material to projects much to the pleasure of Ghoulunatics and True Believers alike.

LEN WEIN

Len Wein's career is highlighted by successes from Swamp Thing to the "All-New, All-Different" X-Men, but few fans know that the award-winning writer and editor started out as a comic-book artist.

As a teenager, Wein was tied to the hip with fellow fanzine writer Marv Wolfman, regularly skipping school to tour the DC Comics offices. After building a rapport with artists and execs like Dick Giordano, Carmine Infantino and Joe Orlando, Wein was able to credibly pitch to the editors. Though his artwork was politely passed upon, a script for *House of Mystery* was accepted and a career as a writer was born. Len attacked his new occupation with gusto, writing for DC, Marvel, Gold Key and Skywald, on everything from Western to horror, and licensed properties from Hot Wheels to Star Trek.

Although his desired career as an artist didn't quite pan out, it did give Wein insight into his collaborator's creative process and helped him garner acclaim as a writer that was "easy to draw." After super-hero work in the early '70s (Daredevil, Superman, Flash), he and artist Bernie Wrightson launched horror mainstay Swamp Thing in the pages of *House of Secrets* #92. Other notable achievements from his tenure at DC include a run on *Justice League of America* and the debut of the Human Target.

Hopping over to Marvel in 1974, where he followed Roy Thomas as editor in chief, Wein scripted several series, including *Incredible Hulk*, where he and artist Herb Trimpe introduced one of comics' most famous characters—Wolverine. That wasn't the end of his mutant milestones, as with artist Dave Cockrum he revived the dormant X-Men property with a new international cast. Its cadre of characters, including Storm, Nightcrawler and Colossus would shortly turn into comics' biggest phenomenon.

Returning to DC, Wein helped spur a creative revival at the company, editing *New Teen Titans*, *Camelot 3000* and *Swamp Thing*, which gave writer Alan Moore his American debut; shortly thereafter, Wein would preside over Moore and Dave Gibbon's groundbreaking *Watchmen*. Since then, Wein's credits in comics, animation and television writing have been numerous and well received as witnessed by his 2008 induction into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-5
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-12
WARLOCK VOLS. 1-2
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-8

THE MARVEL AGE

It was August 1961 and change was hitting the newsstands. *Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. These were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves—and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different—the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

The *Marvel Masterworks* series was created to give comic-book readers everywhere the chance to experience the greatest comics the world has known as they were originally presented.

THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over the heads of all Americans, a new entertaining escape from the newspapers' horrifying realities was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States.

At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary talents as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These skilled writers and artists created a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-4
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
GOLDEN AGE DARING MYSTERY VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE MARVEL COMICS VOLS. 1-7
GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures and unimaginable monsters; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the '40s retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, Atlas had it all!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-5
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

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MARVEL